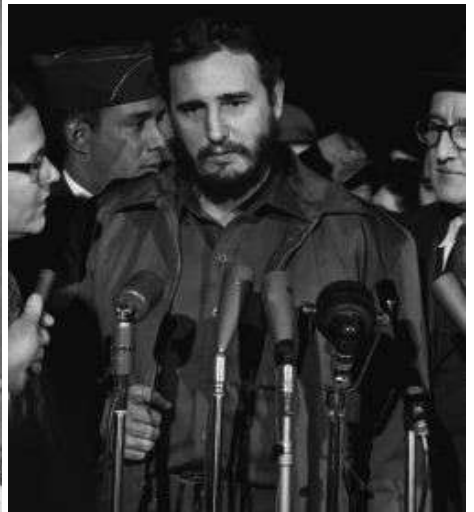


# Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro



**Harold M. Hutchings**

# Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro

Harold M. Hutchings

*Cover photos*

Adolf Hitler leader and chancellor; Commander in chief of the Wehrmacht and commander in chief of the army, 1938.

Fidel Castro in Washington D.C. USA, 1959. Four months after leading a successful revolution in Cuba, Castro visited US for 11 days. President Eisenhower snubbed him, although the Cuban leader did meet with Vice President Nixon. Nixon later said he came away from the meeting with the conclusion that Castro was “either incredibly naive about communism or under communist discipline — my guess is the former.” On the other hand, after meeting with Castro, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson called him “the first democrat of Latin America.”

...

Relations between the United States and Castro deteriorated rapidly after the April visit.

**THIS BOOK IS INTENDED TO SUPPORT THE IB DP HISTORY PAPER 2 –  
WORLD HISTORY TOPIC 10: AUTHORITARIAN STATES (20TH CENTURY)  
EUROPE: GERMANY – HITLER  
AND  
THE AMERICAS: CUBA - CASTRO**

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## Contents

<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Introduction .....	23
How to Use this Book.....	24
<b>Historiographical Viewpoints: Interpretations of the     Authoritarian State of Adolf Hitler .....</b>	<b>26</b>
Common Historiographical Schools of Thought.....	26
Interpretation of the Political School of History .....	26
Interpretation of the Economic School of History .....	27
Interpretation of the Social School of History .....	28
Interpretation of the Cultural School of History .....	30
Interpretation of the Intellectual School of History .....	31
Interpretation of the Marxist School of History.....	32
Interpretation of the Annales School of History .....	34
Interpretation of the Postcolonial School.....	35
<b>Chapter 1 - Revolution in Germany and the Armistice in Austria     .....</b>	<b>37</b>
Key Points.....	37
Overview .....	38
Austria-Hungary's Armistice .....	38
Signing the Armistice.....	38
Italian Offensive and Armistice .....	39
Strategic Implications .....	39
Hindenburg and Ludendorff's Realization .....	40
Revolution in Germany .....	40
Emergence of Revolution .....	40

<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Context and Consequences .....	40
Allied Advances.....	41
Canadian and American Offensives .....	41
Anglo-French Offensive.....	41
German Retreat .....	41
Improved American Operations.....	42
Political Developments.....	42
German Delegates and Armistice Negotiations .....	42
Revolution and Abdication .....	43
Kaiser Wilhelm's Dilemma .....	43
Conclusion .....	43
<b>Chapter 2 - Spark of the German Revolution .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Key Points.....	44
Overview .....	45
Background of the Revolution .....	45
Context .....	45
Military Defeats.....	46
Economic Hardship .....	46
Social Unrest .....	46
Key Events Leading to the Revolution .....	46
Naval Mutiny at Kiel.....	46
Spread of the Mutiny .....	47
Formation of Councils.....	47
Political Developments.....	47
Abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II .....	47

<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Proclamation of the Republic .....	47
Conclusion .....	48
<b>Chapter 3 - Woodrow Wilson: Architect of Democracy? .....</b>	<b>49</b>
Key Points.....	49
Overview .....	50
Early Life .....	50
Birth and Family .....	50
Education and Early Career .....	51
Academic Career and Princeton Presidency .....	51
Early Academic Positions .....	51
Challenges and Achievements .....	51
Political Career .....	52
Governor of New Jersey .....	52
Presidential Election of 1912 .....	52
World War I and Its Aftermath .....	52
Neutrality and Entry into the War .....	52
Versailles Conference and the League of Nations.....	53
Racial Legacy .....	53
Racial Policies .....	53
Impact on Civil Rights .....	53
Conclusion .....	54
<b>Chapter 4 - Wilson's 14 Points.....</b>	<b>55</b>
Key Point .....	55
Overview .....	55
Wilson's Fourteen Points.....	55

<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Conclusion .....	58
<b>Chapter 5 - The Collapse of the German War Effort .....</b>	<b>59</b>
Key Points.....	59
Overview .....	60
The Initial Position .....	61
The German Army's Strength .....	61
The Schlieffen Plan and Early Setbacks .....	61
Strategic and Tactical Errors .....	61
Mismanagement and Operational Failures.....	61
Military Successes and Missteps .....	62
The Final Gamble .....	62
The Spring Offensives.....	62
Continued Offensives and Allied Resistance .....	63
The Collapse of Morale .....	63
Desertion and Surrender .....	63
The Home Front and Revolution.....	63
Political Failures and Consequences .....	64
Governance and Strategic Miscalculations .....	64
The Final Collapse .....	64
Aftermath .....	64
<b>Chapter 6 - The Formation and Downfall of the Bavarian Soviet Republic .....</b>	<b>65</b>
Key Points.....	65
Overview .....	66
Background.....	66

<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
The Birth of the Bavarian Soviet Republic .....	66
Political Chaos and Assassination .....	67
Establishment of the Soviet Republic .....	67
Initial Reforms and Policies .....	67
Failed Coup and Escalation .....	67
The Military Struggle .....	68
Government Counterattacks .....	68
Atrocities and Reprisals .....	68
Aftermath and Legacy .....	69
Continued Violence .....	69
Long-term Implications .....	69
<b>Chapter 7 - The Treaty of Versailles and Its Economic</b>	
<b>Consequences .....</b>	<b>70</b>
Key Points .....	70
Overview .....	71
Economic Strains of World War I .....	71
Wartime Financial Strategies .....	71
Economic Challenges in Britain and France .....	72
Post-War Economic Collapse .....	72
Food Shortages and Economic Disarray .....	72
Debts and Reparations .....	72
The Treaty of Versailles .....	73
Establishing a New Order .....	73
Determining Reparations .....	73
John Maynard Keynes's Critique .....	73



<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Opposition to Heavy Reparations .....	73
Keynes's Proposals .....	74
Economic Musical Chairs .....	74
Debt Repayment and Economic Fragility.....	74
Political and Economic Consequences in Germany.....	74
Divergent Historical Views .....	75
Keynes's Critics .....	75
<b>Chapter 8 - Turmoil in the Early Weimar Republic: The Kapp Putsch and its Aftermath.....</b>	<b>76</b>
Key Points.....	76
Overview .....	77
The Treaty of Versailles and Military Discontent .....	77
Prelude to the Coup.....	78
The Kapp Putsch Unfolds.....	78
Aftermath and the Ruhr Uprising .....	79
Broader Implications .....	80
The Ruhr Red Army and Further Unrest .....	80
Conclusion .....	81
Chapter 9 - The Role of Freikorps in the Early Weimar Republic .....	82
Key Points.....	82
Overview .....	82
Origins and Composition.....	83
Actions During the Early Weimar Republic .....	84
The Ruhr Conflict .....	85
Legacy and Significance .....	85

**Chapter 10 - Germany's Covert War After World War I..... 87**

Key Points.....	87
Overview .....	88
Political and Paramilitary Unrest .....	88
The Aftermath of the Kapp Putsch.....	88
The Government Response .....	89
The Ruhr Campaign.....	89
International Repercussions .....	90
French Occupation of Frankfurt.....	90
The Spa Conference.....	90
The Upper Silesia Plebiscites .....	91
Ethnic and Nationalist Tensions .....	91
Paramilitary Conflicts .....	91
Ongoing Crisis.....	91
The Significance of the Ruhr Red Army.....	92
Context and Formation .....	92
Key Actions and Events .....	92
Political and Social Impact .....	93
Legacy.....	94
Role of Freikorps in the Ruhr Conflict .....	95
Background and Formation of the Freikorps.....	95
Involvement in the Ruhr Conflict.....	95
Political and Social Impact .....	96
Long-Term Consequences .....	97
The Kapp Putsch .....	98

<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
The Weimar Government's Response to the Kapp Putsch	100
Call for a General Strike	101
<b>Chapter 11 - The Origins of Germany's Hyperinflation in 1921</b>	<b>104</b>
Key Points	104
Overview	105
The Financial Crisis	105
Pre-War Stability and Wartime Decisions	105
Post-War Economic Collapse	106
The London Schedule of Payments and Further Instability	107
The Reparations Bill	107
Hyperinflation in Austria	107
Political and Economic Stabilization	108
Stabilization Efforts and the Upper Silesia Plebiscite	108
Division of Upper Silesia	108
Taxation and Economic Consequences	109
Increased Taxes and Wealth Disparities	109
Wealthy Germans and Tax Evasion	109
Social Impact and Currency Collapse	110
Spending Sprees and Social Unrest	110
Loss of Currency Value	110
Financial Expert Consultations and Future Predictions	110
October 1921 Conference	110
Conclusion	111

<b>Chapter 12 - The Prosperous Yet Precarious Era of the Weimar Republic: 1928 .....</b>	<b>112</b>
Key Points.....	112
Overview .....	113
Economic Boom .....	113
Political Stabilization and Economic Policies .....	113
Industrial Modernization and Public Investment.....	114
Consumer Culture and Mass Entertainment .....	114
Economic Weaknesses .....	115
Underlying Economic Issues .....	115
Unemployment and Agricultural Struggles .....	115
Political and Social Challenges .....	116
Legitimacy Crisis and Far-Right Exploitation.....	116
Distrust in the Political System .....	116
Cultural Conservatism and Gender Issues .....	116
Conclusion .....	117
<b>Chapter 13 - The Decline of the Weimar Republic .....</b>	<b>118</b>
Key Points.....	118
Overview .....	119
Political Instability .....	119
Economic Crises.....	120
Social Unrest and Extremism.....	120
Weaknesses in the Weimar Constitution.....	121
External Pressures .....	122
Conclusion .....	122

**Chapter 14 - Loss of Morality during the Weimar Republic .. 123**

Key Points.....	123
Overview .....	123
The Proliferation of Drugs.....	124
Economic Hardships and Drug Availability .....	124
Pharmaceutical Developments .....	125
The Rise of Prostitution .....	125
Economic Desperation and Urban Migration .....	125
The Proliferation of Child Prostitution .....	126
The Decadent Nightlife .....	126
The Dance Halls and Cabarets .....	126
Organized Crime and Corruption .....	126
Sexual Deviancy and Cross-Dressing .....	127
Cross-Dressing and Sexual Deviants .....	127
Cultural Impact.....	127
Decline and Nazi Intervention .....	127
The Economic Collapse .....	127
Nazi Crackdown .....	127
The Rise of Pervitin .....	128
Development and Introduction .....	128
Pervitin in Civilian Life .....	128
Military Adoption.....	129
Social and Psychological Impacts .....	129
Government and Medical Response .....	130
Conclusion .....	131

<b>Chapter 15 - Emergence of Nazi Germany .....</b>	<b>132</b>
Key Points.....	132
Overview .....	132
Conditions That Gave Rise to Hitler's Germany .....	133
The Rise of Authoritarianism in Germany.....	133
Impact of the Treaty of Versailles.....	133
Economic and Social Strain.....	134
Political Instability .....	134
Rise of Radical Ideologies.....	134
Hitler's Ascendancy .....	135
Economic Factors.....	135
Weakness of the Weimar Political System .....	136
Political Violence .....	136
Methods Used to Establish the Nazi Regime .....	137
The Nazi Party Platform .....	137
Use of Force .....	137
Ideology.....	138
Persuasion and Coercion .....	138
<b>Chapter 16 - Establishment of Nazi Germany.....</b>	<b>140</b>
Key Points.....	140
Overview .....	140
From Chancellor to <i>Der Führer</i> .....	141
The Reichstag Fire.....	141
The March 1933 Reichstag Elections.....	142
Passing of the Enabling Act.....	142

<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Gleichschaltung .....	142
Night of the Long Knives .....	143
Hitler's SS.....	143
SS Organization .....	144
SS Organization .....	144
<b>Chapter 17 - Opposition to Hitler's Regime.....</b>	<b>145</b>
Key Points.....	145
Overview .....	146
Night of the Long Knives .....	146
Limited Opposition After the Rise of Nazism.....	147
Left-Wing Opposition .....	147
Right-Wing Opposition .....	147
Operation Valkyrie .....	148
Opposition from German Youth.....	148
Religious Opposition .....	149
Why the Opposition in Germany Failed .....	150
<b>Chapter 18 - Nazi Germany's Domestic Policies .....</b>	<b>151</b>
Key Points.....	151
Overview .....	152
Economic Policies.....	152
Autarky and the Four-Year Plan .....	153
Labor Policies .....	154
Propaganda.....	155
Media Control .....	155
Arts and Education .....	156

<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens (BDM) .....	156
Women in Nazi Germany .....	157
Treatment of Minorities in Nazi Germany .....	157
Persecution of Jews .....	158
<b>Chapter 19 - Hitler's Foreign Policy .....</b>	<b>160</b>
Foreign Policy to Consolidate Power .....	160
Key Points .....	160
Overview .....	160
The Treaty of Versailles .....	161
Non-Aggression Pact with Poland .....	162
Saar Plebiscite .....	162
German Rearmament .....	162
Remilitarization of the Rhineland .....	163
New Diplomatic Alignments .....	163
The Spanish Civil War .....	163
The Anschluss with Austria .....	163
The Sudetenland .....	164
Anglo-German Declaration .....	164
Poland and the Start of World War II .....	164
Invasion of Poland .....	165
World War II and Hitler's Demise .....	165
Conclusion .....	165
<b>Historiographical Viewpoints: Interpretations of the Authoritarian State of Fidel Castro .....</b>	<b>167</b>
Common Historiographical Schools of Thought .....	167



<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Interpretation of the Political School of History .....	167
Interpretation of the Economic School of History .....	168
Interpretation of the Social School of History .....	170
Interpretation of the Cultural School of History .....	171
Interpretation of the Intellectual School of History .....	172
Interpretation of the Marxist School of History.....	174
Interpretation of the Annales School of History .....	175
Interpretation of the Postcolonial School of History.....	176
<b>Chapter 20 - Foundations of the Cuban Revolution .....</b>	<b>178</b>
Key Points.....	178
Overview .....	179
Background of the Spanish-American War .....	180
The Aftermath of the Spanish-American War .....	180
Economic Boom and Bust.....	181
Rise of Fulgencio Batista.....	182
Prelude to the Revolution.....	183
<b>Chapter 21 - Emergence of Castro's Cuba .....</b>	<b>184</b>
Key Points.....	184
Overview .....	185
Economic Weakness in Cuba .....	186
Political Weakness.....	187
Fulgencio Batista .....	187
Opposition to Batista .....	187
Fidel Castro .....	188
Moncada Barracks Attack .....	188

<i>Authoritarian States: Hiter and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Effects of the Moncada Assault .....	189
Impact of Che Guevara .....	189
The Granma Attack .....	190
Propaganda and Guerrilla Warfare.....	190
Conclusion .....	191
<b>Chapter 22 - Establishment of Castro's Dictatorship.....</b>	<b>192</b>
Key Points.....	192
Overview .....	193
Consolidation of Castro's Rule.....	194
Towards a One-Party State .....	194
Cuban-American Relations .....	195
Bay of Pigs Invasion.....	195
Cuban-Soviet Relations.....	196
Cuban Missile Crisis .....	196
<b>Chapter 23 - Opposition in Castro's Cuba.....</b>	<b>198</b>
Key Points.....	198
Overview .....	199
Consolidation of Castro's Rule.....	200
<b>Chapter 24 - Castro's Domestic Policies .....</b>	<b>204</b>
Key Points.....	204
Overview .....	206
Aims and Results of Castro's Domestic Policies in Cuba.....	206
Castro's Social Policies.....	209
Women in Cuba .....	210
Castro and Religion.....	211

<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Treatment of Minorities .....	212
Economic and Social Gains Under Castro's Rule.....	212
<b>Chapter 25 - Castro's Foreign Policy .....</b>	<b>213</b>
Key Points.....	213
Overview .....	214
Castro's Foreign Policies and Maintenance of Power .....	214
Early Years and Soviet Alliance .....	215
Support for National Liberation Movements .....	216
Involvement in Africa.....	216
Impact of the Fall of the Soviet Union.....	217
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>219</b>
German Territorial Changes 1935 to 1939 .....	219
Castro's Revolution .....	220
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>224</b>
Hitler's Germany.....	224
Castro's Cuba .....	233
<b>Copyright permissions .....</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Glossary.....</b>	<b>237</b>
Hitler's Germany .....	237
Castro's Cuba .....	241
<b>Index</b>	<b>243</b>
<b>About the Author .....</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>How to Cite this Book .....</b>	<b>254</b>
MLA Citation .....	254

APA Citation .....	254
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Chicago Citation .....	254
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# Preface

Dear Reader,

As a high school history teacher with extensive classroom experience, I have dedicated many years to sharing my passion for history and guiding students through the intricate narratives that shape our world. Over time, I have curated a collection of class notes designed to illuminate the curriculum and enliven the study of history. I am pleased to present this book, a compilation of these notes, for the benefit of both colleagues and students.

To my fellow educators, while there are numerous detailed textbooks available, this book is intended as a resource to enhance your teaching. The notes and explanations contained herein have been honed through numerous lessons, discussions, and student feedback. I hope you find these topics useful, either as a supplement to your existing materials or as inspiration for new understandings of content. Sharing these notes is my contribution to our shared mission of delivering the best possible education to our students.

To the students, this book is designed to support your journey through history. These notes aim to help you take better, more organized class notes and serve as a reliable reference for reinforcing material. Whether revisiting class topics, catching up on missed content, or preparing for exams, I trust this book will be a valuable tool in your academic success. The notes are structured to reflect my teaching style, facilitating a connection between the material and our classroom discussions.

Thank you for embarking on this journey with me. I am excited to see how these notes will be utilized and adapted in your learning and teaching endeavors.

Warm regards,

*Mr. Hutchings*

High School History Teacher

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*“History is the study of all  
the world’s crime.”*

**Voltaire, French writer  
and philosopher  
(1694-1778)**

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## Introduction

This book was created to provide students ‘what they need’ to be knowledgeable their IB DP Paper 2 World History – Topic 10 exam on Authoritarian States (20<sup>th</sup> century). As Topic 10 questions often ask students to ‘compare and contrast’ for **two** authoritarian states in different world or ‘discuss/ evaluate /examine’ amongst **two** authoritarian states from a different world region; two authoritarian states have been presented in this book.

I have known teachers to teach two authoritarian states concurrently with each other in attempt to make it easier to teach students similarities and differences between the regimes. This is usually done to make it easier for students to respond to exam questions which require two authoritarian states as the students have had practice examining both topically.

I have also known teachers to present each authoritarian state separately allowing students to delve deeper in each authoritarian state and to avoid confusion as to which policy and practice belongs to which authoritarian state.

Both teaching strategies have their own strengths and weaknesses. However authoritarian states are presented in the classroom, students do need to have substantial knowledge to do well on the Paper 2 DP History exam.

For Paper 2 exams, and Paper 3 exams, assessors will look for a student to have two viewpoints on their material. The viewpoints are expected to be *historiographical*, or ‘schools of history.’ As is the case, this book provides eight historiographical viewpoints, and their criticisms, for each authoritarian state. It is not required for students to learn the names of historians, but they are to know the name of the historical school, social, Marxist, Annales, etc.

## How to Use this Book

### *For Students:*

This book serves as an excellent introduction to new material before class and is highly useful for review and clarification. However, it should not replace attending class and taking notes. In class, remain engaged and attentive.

I recommend starting with the glossary and index, referring back to both frequently while reading the material. This approach has been my personal strategy for years, and I now pass it on to you. As you read, take notes. *Outline notes* may be best. Track all Treaties, policies, events, and names. Write down dates! Draw arrows on your notes to link events to each other and to policies and people. Remember, mastering history requires two key skills: understanding the content and writing convincing arguments. There are no shortcuts. Read often and write frequently. Good luck.

### *For Teachers:*

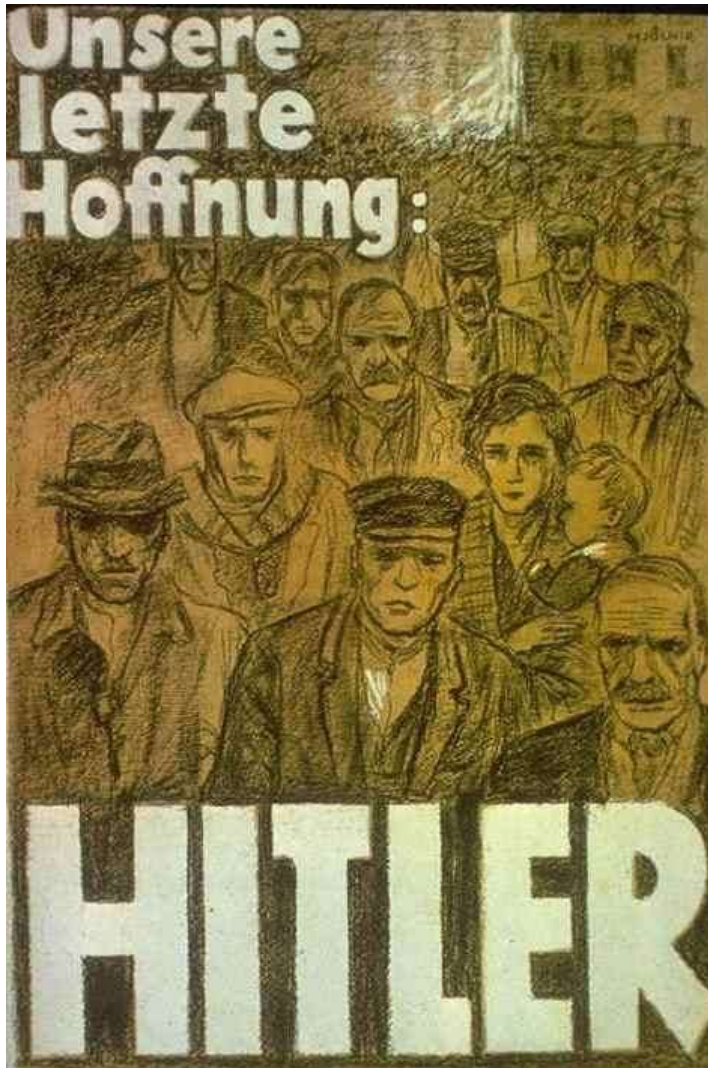
Whether you are new to the topic or seeking to deepen your understanding, this book can be a valuable resource. It provides insights into "what's next" when selecting topics for your curriculum. The depth covered in this book aligns with what high school students should know for their senior exams.

This guide can help you balance your presentation of material, ensuring you do not spend too much time on one topic at the expense of others. Most teachers in English-speaking schools have 180 school days per year, but with various school activities, the actual teaching days are fewer. May this book assist you in balancing topics and planning the scope of your lessons effectively.

To all of you, my best wishes for a successful and enriching educational journey.



# Hitler's Germany



**Translation:** In the face of Germany's ruin and economic crisis: "Our last hope: Hitler," 1932.

# Historiographical Viewpoints:

## Interpretations of the

## Authoritarian State of Adolf Hitler

### Common Historiographical Schools of Thought

#### Interpretation of the Political School of History

The Political School of history interprets Hitler's Nazi Germany primarily through the lens of political structures, state policies, and leadership dynamics. This perspective emphasizes the totalitarian nature of the regime, focusing on the centralized control exerted by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party over all aspects of German life. It examines the mechanisms of political power, such as propaganda, state surveillance, and the suppression of dissent, which were used to maintain control and implement the regime's ideological goals. The Political School also explores the legal and institutional frameworks that enabled the Nazis to consolidate power, such as the Enabling Act and the use of the SS and Gestapo.

"Nazi Germany was a classic example of a totalitarian state, where the regime sought to control not only the political sphere but also the private lives and thoughts of its citizens, creating a comprehensive apparatus of surveillance and repression."

Kershaw, Ian. *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*. Bloomsbury, 2000.

#### *Criticism of the Political Historical View*

Critics of the Political School's approach argue that it can sometimes overly focus on the structural and institutional aspects of the Nazi regime, potentially underplaying the broader

social, cultural, and economic factors that also contributed to its rise and functioning. They contend that while the political mechanisms of control are crucial to understanding the regime, it is equally important to explore the social conditions, popular attitudes, and economic contexts that allowed such a regime to take hold. Additionally, critics suggest that this perspective might not fully account for the agency of ordinary citizens, both in supporting and resisting the regime.

"By concentrating predominantly on the political structures of Nazi Germany, we risk neglecting the complex social dynamics and the diverse responses of the population, which were integral to both the regime's stability and its eventual collapse."

Broszat, Martin. *The Hitler State: The Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich*. Longman, 1981.

## Interpretation of the Economic School of History

The Economic School of history interprets Hitler's Nazi Germany through the lens of economic policies, practices, and their impact on both the state and society. This perspective focuses on the economic factors that contributed to the rise and maintenance of the Nazi regime, such as the Great Depression's role in destabilizing Weimar Germany and fostering support for extremist solutions. It examines how the Nazis implemented autarky (self-sufficiency), rearmament, and public works programs like the Autobahn to stimulate the economy and reduce unemployment. The Economic School also explores the exploitation of resources in occupied territories, the economic aspects of the Holocaust, and the role of major industrialists and businesses in supporting the regime.

"Nazi economic policy was fundamentally oriented towards preparing Germany for war, with a particular emphasis on rearmament and the quest for economic self-sufficiency."

Overy, Richard J. *The Nazi Economic Recovery 1932–1938*. Cambridge UP, 1996.

### *Criticism of the Economic Historical View*

Critics of the Economic School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize economic factors at the expense of understanding the broader ideological and political context of Nazi Germany. They contend that focusing primarily on economic policies and outcomes may overlook the role of Nazi ideology in shaping economic decisions and the extent to which these policies were driven by racial and ideological goals, rather than purely economic considerations. Additionally, there is a concern that this perspective might underplay the importance of the regime's political and military strategies, as well as the human cost of its policies.

"While the economic history of Nazi Germany provides essential insights into how the regime funded its ambitions, it risks downplaying the ideological fervor and racial motivations that were integral to understanding the broader Nazi agenda."

Tooze, Adam. *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*. Penguin Books, 2008.

Social

### *Interpretation of the Social School of History*

The Social School of history interprets Hitler's Nazi Germany by focusing on the experiences, behaviors, and everyday lives of the German population under the regime. This perspective examines

how the Nazi state affected various social groups, including women, youth, workers, and minorities, and how these groups responded to the regime's policies and propaganda. It explores the impact of Nazi ideology on social norms, education, family life, and the roles of different organizations like the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls. The Social School also investigates issues such as conformity, resistance, and the social dynamics of complicity and dissent within German society.

"The Nazi regime's social policies were aimed at creating a Volksgemeinschaft, or people's community, which sought to homogenize society by excluding those deemed racially or politically undesirable."

Koonz, Claudia. *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics*. St. Martin's Press, 1987.

### *Criticism of the Social Historical View*

Critics of the Social School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the role of social dynamics and everyday life, potentially underestimating the importance of political and ideological factors in shaping the Nazi state. They contend that focusing primarily on social history may lead to an incomplete understanding of the regime's totalitarian nature and the central role of ideology in guiding its policies and actions. Additionally, critics suggest that this perspective might downplay the agency of political and military leaders in favor of broader societal trends.

"While social history provides valuable insights into the everyday experiences of people under the Nazi regime, it risks downplaying the centrality of ideology and the totalitarian mechanisms that were critical in shaping those experiences."

*Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro* Hutchings  
Browning, Christopher R. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. HarperCollins, 1992.

## Interpretation of the Cultural School of History

The Cultural School of history interprets Hitler's Nazi Germany through the lens of culture, examining how cultural expressions, values, and norms were shaped and manipulated by the regime. This perspective focuses on the role of propaganda, art, literature, film, music, and architecture in promoting Nazi ideology and creating a unified national identity. It explores how the regime sought to control and influence cultural production to align with its ideological goals, such as promoting Aryan supremacy and anti-Semitism. The Cultural School also looks at how cultural symbols, rituals, and festivals were used to mobilize the population and reinforce loyalty to the state.

"The Nazi regime's cultural policies were a fundamental component of its totalitarian control, seeking to reshape German society's cultural landscape to reflect and reinforce Nazi ideology."

Spotts, Frederic. *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*. Overlook Press, 2002.

## Criticism of the Cultural Historical View

Critics of the Cultural School's approach argue that it can sometimes place too much emphasis on cultural expressions and symbols, potentially overshadowing the political, economic, and social dimensions of Nazi Germany. They contend that while cultural analysis provides important insights into how the regime sought to shape public perception and behavior, it may not fully account for the coercive and violent methods used to enforce conformity and suppress dissent. Additionally, critics suggest

that this perspective might underplay the role of individual agency and the political leadership's decision-making processes.

"Focusing heavily on the cultural aspects of the Nazi regime risks underestimating the extent to which political repression, economic control, and outright violence were essential in maintaining the regime's power."

Kershaw, Ian. *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*. Bloomsbury, 2000.

Intellectual

## Interpretation of the Intellectual School of History

The Intellectual School of history interprets Hitler's Nazi Germany by focusing on the ideas, ideologies, and intellectual currents that influenced and were propagated by the regime. This perspective examines how Nazi ideology, with its emphasis on concepts like racial purity, anti-Semitism, and Aryan supremacy, was developed, disseminated, and institutionalized. It explores the philosophical and theoretical foundations of Nazism, including the contributions of intellectual figures, the use of pseudo-scientific theories, and the regime's efforts to control and shape intellectual life in Germany. The Intellectual School also looks at the role of education, academia, and intellectual discourse in both supporting and resisting the Nazi state.

"The intellectual roots of Nazi ideology were deeply intertwined with broader currents in European thought, including a distorted application of Darwinian ideas, anti-Semitic traditions, and theories of racial hierarchy."

Burleigh, Michael. *The Third Reich: A New History*. Hill and Wang, 2000.

*Criticism of the Intellectual Historical View*

Critics of the Intellectual School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the role of ideas and intellectual history at the expense of understanding the political, social, and economic realities of Nazi Germany. They contend that focusing primarily on the intellectual origins and theoretical underpinnings of Nazism may overlook the practical mechanisms of power, the coercive and violent enforcement of policies, and the regime's impact on everyday life. Additionally, there is a concern that this perspective might not fully account for the ways in which ideology was manipulated or instrumentalized by political leaders for practical purposes.

"While understanding the intellectual foundations of Nazism is crucial, it is equally important to recognize how these ideas were implemented through state machinery, social policies, and widespread propaganda, often with a degree of pragmatism that transcended ideological purity."

Kershaw, Ian. *Hitler: A Biography*. W.W. Norton & Co., 2008.

## Interpretation of the Marxist School of History

The Marxist School of history interprets Hitler's Nazi Germany primarily through the lens of economic and class analysis, viewing the regime as a response to the crises of capitalism and as a tool for maintaining bourgeois dominance. This perspective emphasizes the economic conditions that led to the rise of Nazism, such as the Great Depression and the failures of the Weimar Republic, and examines how Nazi policies served the interests of big business and industrial capitalists. The Marxist School argues that the Nazi state was characterized by its efforts to suppress the working class and socialist movements, using



state power to protect capitalist interests and expand German imperialism.

"Nazism represented the most extreme and violent form of monopoly capitalism, using state power to crush working-class resistance and expand German economic dominance through aggressive militarism."

Neumann, Franz. *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944*. Harper & Brothers, 1944.

### *Criticism of the Marxist Historical View*

Critics of the Marxist School's approach argue that it can sometimes reduce the complex nature of Nazi Germany to a simplistic analysis of economic and class factors. They contend that this perspective may underplay the ideological and racial components of Nazism, including the central role of anti-Semitism and the regime's genocidal policies. Critics also suggest that the Marxist view might overlook the importance of political dynamics, individual agency, and the cultural and social dimensions that shaped the Nazi state and its appeal to various segments of the German population.

"While the Marxist analysis provides important insights into the economic underpinnings of Nazi Germany, it often overlooks the centrality of ideology and the complex interplay of race, politics, and culture in shaping the regime's policies and actions."

Kershaw, Ian. *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*. Bloomsbury, 2000.

## Interpretation of the Annales School of History

The Annales School of history, originating from France, focuses on long-term historical structures, social mentalities, and environmental factors, rather than just events or prominent figures. In the context of Hitler's Nazi Germany, the Annales School would interpret the regime by examining the broader, underlying societal conditions that enabled the rise and consolidation of the Nazi state. This perspective emphasizes the importance of social structures, collective mentalities, demographic trends, and geographic factors. It looks at how long-term historical processes, such as the impact of World War I, economic depression, and cultural shifts, created a fertile ground for the acceptance of Nazi ideology and totalitarian control.

"The rise of Nazism cannot be fully understood without considering the *longue durée* of German history, where deep-seated social structures and mentalities played a crucial role in shaping the political landscape."

Braudel, Fernand. *The Perspective of the World*. Vol. 3, Civilization and Capitalism 15th–18th Century, University of California Press, 1992.

### *Criticism of the Annales Historical View*

Critics of the Annales School's approach argue that its emphasis on long-term structures and collective mentalities can sometimes obscure the significance of individual actions, decisions, and short-term political developments. They contend that this perspective might underplay the specific ideological content of Nazism, the role of Hitler's leadership, and the regime's use of terror and propaganda. Additionally, critics suggest that the Annales School's focus on social and economic structures may not fully account for the immediate and

catastrophic impact of Nazi policies, particularly in terms of genocide and war.

"While the Annales approach offers valuable insights into the underlying conditions of Nazi Germany, it risks diminishing the role of ideology, individual leadership, and the brutal tactics employed by the regime to consolidate power."

Fritzsche, Peter. *Life and Death in the Third Reich*. Harvard UP, 2008.

## Interpretation of the Postcolonial School

The Postcolonial School of history interprets Hitler's Nazi Germany by examining the regime's ideologies, policies, and actions through the lens of colonialism and imperialism. This perspective highlights the parallels between Nazi expansionist goals and the practices of European colonial powers, emphasizing how notions of racial superiority, territorial expansion, and resource exploitation were not unique to the Nazis but part of a broader colonial mindset. The Postcolonial School focuses on how the Nazis sought to create a German empire in Eastern Europe, often referring to these regions as "living space" (Lebensraum) similar to colonial territories. This approach also explores the racial hierarchies and genocidal policies of the Nazis, linking them to the broader history of racial discrimination and colonial violence.

"The Nazi regime's quest for Lebensraum can be seen as a continuation of the European colonial tradition, where the ideology of racial superiority justified the subjugation and extermination of 'inferior' peoples."

Mazower, Mark. *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*. Penguin Press, 2008.

*Criticism of the Postcolonial Historical View*

Critics of the Postcolonial School's approach argue that it can sometimes draw overly simplistic parallels between Nazi policies and European colonialism, potentially downplaying the unique aspects of Nazi ideology and the Holocaust. They contend that while there are valid comparisons, the scale and specific ideological underpinnings of Nazi genocide and territorial ambitions were distinct and not merely extensions of colonial practices. Additionally, critics suggest that this perspective may underemphasize the role of anti-Semitism and the specific targeting of Jews in Nazi policies, as well as the broader context of European antisemitic traditions that were not directly linked to colonialism.

"While the postcolonial framework provides important insights into the imperialistic elements of Nazi ideology, it can sometimes obscure the specific genocidal intentions towards Jews and other groups, which were not merely byproducts of a colonial mindset but central to Nazi beliefs."

Kershaw, Ian. *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*. Bloomsbury, 2000.

# Chapter 1 - Revolution in Germany and the Armistice in Austria

## Key Points

### 1. Austria-Hungary's Armistice:

- a. **Signing the Armistice:** Austria-Hungary signed an armistice with the Allies, isolating Germany in the war. This occurred after the Ottoman Empire had also signed an armistice, ending its active participation in the war.
- b. **Italian Offensive:** The Italian forces continued their offensive, capturing large territories and taking many prisoners, which led to the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into new nations.
- c. **Strategic Implications:** The collapse of Austria-Hungary left southern Germany exposed and further weakened the Central Powers, especially with Bulgaria's surrender, which severed key supply routes and communications.

### 2. Internal Turmoil in Germany:

- a. **Emergence of Revolution:** As Germany faced external military pressures, internal revolution began to erupt, exacerbating the precarious position of the German war effort.
- b. **Revolution Spread:** Mutinies and uprisings spread across Germany, including a significant mutiny in the navy and social unrest in major cities.

### 3. Allied Advances in the West:

- a. **Canadian and American Offensives:** Canadian forces occupied Valenciennes, and American forces launched a successful attack on the Meuse, breaking through German lines and causing a general retreat.
- b. **Anglo-French Offensive:** The major offensive captured thousands of prisoners and significant artillery, leading to a rapid German retreat.

### 4. Political Developments:

- a. **Armistice Negotiations:** German delegates, led by Matthias Erzberger, began armistice negotiations with the Allies, facing strict terms and a tight deadline for acceptance.

- b. **Revolution and Abdication:** Amidst the negotiations, widespread revolution forced German leaders to call for Kaiser Wilhelm's abdication, as governmental authority collapsed.
- 5. **Endgame of World War I:**
  - a. **Collapse of German Authority:** With internal revolution, military defeats, and imminent armistice, Germany faced the end of its participation in World War I.
  - b. **Allied Victory:** The combination of internal unrest and external military pressure led to the ultimate defeat and surrender of Germany.

## Overview

Chapter 1 of "Revolution in Germany and the Armistice in Austria" explores the crucial moments leading to the end of World War I. Austria-Hungary's armistice and the subsequent Italian offensive left Germany isolated and vulnerable. Internally, Germany faced revolutionary upheaval that compounded its military defeats. Allied forces made significant advances, breaking through German lines and prompting a general retreat. Amidst this chaos, armistice negotiations commenced under dire conditions for Germany, culminating in calls for Kaiser Wilhelm's abdication and the collapse of German authority. This chapter sets the stage for the final act of World War I, highlighting the interplay of military defeats and revolutionary movements that brought the conflict to a close.

## Austria-Hungary's Armistice

### Signing the Armistice

A pivotal moment in World War I as Austria-Hungary signed an armistice with the Allies, leaving Germany to continue the fight alone. The Ottoman Empire had signed an armistice, bringing an

end to their active participation in the war. The Italian offensive against Austria-Hungary continued, seizing large areas of territory and capturing tens of thousands of prisoners as the Austro-Hungarian Empire began to disintegrate into new nations. Despite earlier requests for an armistice, Emperor Karl of Austria-Hungary did not secure one until October 4, 1918.<sup>1</sup>

## Italian Offensive and Armistice

On November 3rd, the Allies advanced along the entire Italian front before the armistice was signed. Hostilities officially ceased at noon on the 4th. The Italians aimed to capture as much territory as possible before the armistice, including Trento on the 1st and Trieste on the 3rd, the latter taken by amphibious assault. By the time the armistice was signed, approximately 300,000 troops from Austro-Hungarian lands had become prisoners of war. The Italian army also advanced in Albania, and the armistice required Austrian demobilization, leaving southern Germany completely exposed.

## Strategic Implications

The collapse of the Central Powers' unity was rapid and disconcerting. Bulgaria's surrender removed 14 combat divisions from the Central Powers, enabling the Allies to liberate Serbia and advance to the Danube. This severed the Danube shipping route and overland communications, preventing Germany from supplying Turkey. With the best Turkish units in the Caucasus, Constantinople was left vulnerable. Romanian oil fields also became exposed, particularly as Romania, never fully disarmed,

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<sup>1</sup> Emperor Karl I of Austria-Hungary requested an armistice on October 4, 1918. This request was part of the broader efforts by the Central Powers to end World War I. The formal armistice with Austria-Hungary was signed later, on November 3, 1918, leading to the end of hostilities between Austria-Hungary and the Allied Powers.

was poised to rejoin the Allies. Facing invasion from Serbia and Romania, the Hungarian portion of the Habsburg Monarchy announced the withdrawal of its forces from the Italian front in late October. The implications of Bulgaria's surrender for the Central Powers were dire.

## Hindenburg and Ludendorff's Realization

Reflecting on the situation, it became apparent that Hindenburg and Ludendorff were correct in asserting that the war was lost when the Macedonian front was broken. This breakthrough had a significant impact because it occurred during Foch's major offensive and followed two months of continuous German defeats and setbacks. The Bavarian plenipotentiary at the OHL suspected that the German High Command used Bulgaria's surrender as a pretext for conceding defeat. Despite this, attacks continued in the west.

## Revolution in Germany

### Emergence of Revolution

Simultaneously, Germany faced internal turmoil as revolution erupted within its borders. This upheaval exacerbated the already precarious position of the German war effort.

### Context and Consequences

As the Ottoman Empire had signed an armistice the October 30, 1918, the active war had ended for them. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Italian advances, and the Allied occupation of key territories left Germany fighting alone. These external pressures, combined with internal revolution, significantly weakened Germany's position in the war.



## Allied Advances

### Canadian and American Offensives

On November 1, 1918, the Canadians occupied Valenciennes.<sup>2</sup>

On November 1st, the Americans launched an attack on the Meuse, using powerful artillery batteries from 14-inch battleship guns mounted on railways. The Americans also deployed mustard gas for the first time, decimating the German artillery nearest them. Low-flying planes machine-gunned the defenders, while high-flying bombers targeted communications, stores, and rallying points. For the first time, the Americans completely broke through the German lines, and the enemy fled without any possibility of regrouping.

### Anglo-French Offensive

On November 4th, a major Anglo-French offensive began on a 50 km front, from east of Scheldt at Valenciennes to Guise on the Oise. The offensive reached east of Le Quesnoy, halfway through Mormal Forest, past Landrecies on the Sambre, and across the Sambre-Oise Canal. The Allies captured 10,000 prisoners and 200 guns. That same day, the British attacked the Sambre Canal, where the poet Wilfred Owen was killed. The Allies planned new attacks for the following week, with the French advancing into Lorraine and the Americans joining them.

### German Retreat

On November 5th, the British captured Le Quesnoy and Mormal Forest, and the French crossed the Ardennes Canal. From

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<sup>2</sup> During World War I, Canadian forces occupied Valenciennes on November 1, 1918. This was part of the final Allied offensives that led to the end of the war. The capture of Valenciennes was a significant achievement for the Canadian Corps, contributing to the overall success of the Hundred Days Offensive.

November 5th, for the first time in the war, the Germans were in a general retreat. The next day, the Americans reached the Meuse Riverbank opposite Sedan. The rapid advance created confusion, with conflicting orders and a growing shortage of supplies. Despite these challenges, the scale of the victory was undeniable.

## Improved American Operations

American fighting demonstrated significant improvement. Internal appraisals had previously been critical, but now noted vast improvements in infantry operations, response speed, effectiveness, and supply speed. On November 7th, the French and Americans threatened Charleville and Mezieres. The Americans occupied the heights opposite Sedan, severing the Germans' last lateral railway. Despite these successes, the Allies continued to suffer casualties, with 133,000 French troops and 100,000 British troops killed, wounded, or missing in October alone.

## Political Developments

### German Delegates and Armistice Negotiations

On November 6th, German armistice delegates left Berlin for the Western Front. Allied Supreme Commander Ferdinand Foch received them on November 7th at Rethondes, near Compiègne Forest. Foch refused a request for a provisional armistice, demanding acceptance or refusal of the terms by 11:00 on the 11th. The German delegation, led by Matthias Erzberger, was taken on a roundabout journey, unaware of their destination. The atmosphere was decidedly less than cordial.

## Revolution and Abdication

The German Third Naval Squadron arrived in Kiel after naval sedition and mutiny caused Admiral Franz von Hipper to rescind his order for an all-out battle with the British. On November 3rd, 3,000 sailors mutinied, raising the red banner and the slogan "Frieden und Brot" (peace and bread). The mutiny spread to 20,000 garrison troops. By November 5th, sailors in Lubeck, Travemünde, Hamburg, Bremen, and Wilhelmshaven joined the revolution. German social-democrat leader Friedrich Ebert called for the Kaiser's immediate abdication. Quartermaster General Wilhelm Groener reported that an armistice must be signed by November 9th at the latest, as revolution was imminent, and the government's authority had collapsed.

## Kaiser Wilhelm's Dilemma

On November 8th, Admiral von Hintze informed Kaiser Wilhelm that his navy would no longer obey orders. The German government faced imminent collapse, with revolution sweeping across the country and armistice negotiations underway.

## Conclusion

Austria-Hungary signed an armistice, ending Habsburg rule and leaving Germany isolated. Allied advances continued in the west, and revolution swept across Germany, bringing the country to the brink of collapse. The stage was set for the final act of World War I, with armistice negotiations underway and Germany in turmoil.

# Chapter 2 - Spark of the German Revolution

## Key Points

### 1. Background of the Revolution:

- a. **Context:** By late 1918, Germany was facing military defeats, economic hardships, and social unrest.
- b. **Military Defeats:** The Allies' offensives, including the Hundred Days Offensive, resulted in high casualties and low morale. The collapse of the Central Powers' alliance further isolated Germany.
- c. **Economic Hardship:** Blockades led to shortages of food and essential goods, causing widespread hunger and suffering. The war effort strained the economy, leading to inflation and instability.
- d. **Social Unrest:** The war created significant social unrest, with workers and soldiers demanding an end to the war and better living conditions.

### 2. Key Events Leading to the Revolution:

- a. **Naval Mutiny at Kiel:** In late October 1918, sailors of the German High Seas Fleet at Kiel refused orders for a final battle against the British Royal Navy. This mutiny was driven by their unwillingness to fight a war they saw as lost and by frustration with harsh conditions.
- b. **Spread of the Mutiny:** The Kiel mutiny quickly spread to other naval bases and cities. On November 3, 1918, sailors in Kiel raised the red flag of revolution and took control of the city, joined by workers and soldiers forming councils.
- c. **Formation of Councils:** Workers' and soldiers' councils were established across Germany, taking control of local governments and military units and challenging the authority of the existing German government.

### 3. Political Developments:

- a. **Abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II:** Faced with widespread revolt, political leaders recognized the need for change. On November 9, 1918, Chancellor Max von Baden announced

the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II, who fled to the Netherlands, ending the German Empire.

- b. **Proclamation of the Republic:** On the same day, Philipp Scheidemann of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) proclaimed the establishment of the Weimar Republic from the Reichstag balcony in Berlin to appease revolutionaries and prevent further radicalism.

## Overview

Chapter 2 of "Spark of the German Revolution" examines the events leading to the German Revolution of 1918-1919. It highlights the military defeats, economic hardships, and social unrest that plagued Germany by late 1918. The immediate spark was the naval mutiny at Kiel, which rapidly spread and led to the formation of workers' and soldiers' councils across the country. Faced with widespread revolt, Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated, and the Weimar Republic was proclaimed on November 9, 1918. This revolution marked the end of the German Empire and paved the way for significant political and social changes in Germany.

## Background of the Revolution

### Context

The German Revolution of 1918-1919 was the result of a combination of military defeats, economic hardship, and social unrest that had been building throughout the course of World War I. By late 1918, Germany was on the brink of collapse, both on the battlefield and at home.

## Military Defeats

Germany had been suffering a series of military defeats. The Allies' successful offensives on the Western Front, including the Hundred Days Offensive, had pushed German forces back, leading to high casualties and diminishing morale among the troops. The collapse of the Central Powers' alliance, particularly with the surrenders of Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, further isolated Germany and compounded its military difficulties.

## Economic Hardship

The war had taken a severe toll on the German economy. Blockades by the Allies had resulted in shortages of food and other essential goods, leading to widespread hunger and suffering among the civilian population. The economy was also strained by the need to support the war effort, causing inflation and economic instability.

## Social Unrest

The prolonged war and its associated hardships had created significant social unrest within Germany. The disparity between the suffering of the working class and the relative comfort of the elite exacerbated class tensions. Workers and soldiers began to demand an end to the war and better living conditions.

## Key Events Leading to the Revolution

### Naval Mutiny at Kiel

The immediate spark of the German Revolution was the naval mutiny at Kiel in late October 1918. Sailors of the German High Seas Fleet, stationed at Kiel, refused to follow orders for a final, potentially suicidal, battle against the British Royal Navy. This act of defiance was driven by their unwillingness to fight a war they

saw as already lost and by their frustration with the harsh conditions and poor treatment they endured.

## Spread of the Mutiny

The mutiny at Kiel quickly spread to other naval bases and cities. On November 3, 1918, sailors in Kiel raised the red flag of revolution and took control of the city. They were soon joined by workers and soldiers, forming councils similar to the soviets of the Russian Revolution.

## Formation of Councils

Workers' and soldiers' councils (Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte) were established across Germany. These councils began to take control of local governments and military units, effectively challenging the authority of the existing German government.

## Political Developments

### Abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II

Faced with the widespread revolt and the inability of the military to maintain control, political leaders in Germany recognized the need for change. On November 9, 1918, Chancellor Max von Baden announced the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II and handed over power to Friedrich Ebert, the leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Wilhelm fled to the Netherlands, marking the end of the German Empire.

### Proclamation of the Republic

On the same day, November 9, 1918, Philipp Scheidemann, a prominent SPD member, proclaimed the establishment of the Weimar Republic from a balcony of the Reichstag in Berlin. This move aimed to appease the revolutionaries and prevent the further spread of radicalism.

## Conclusion

The German Revolution was sparked by a combination of military defeats, economic hardship, and social unrest. The immediate trigger was the naval mutiny at Kiel, which rapidly spread and led to the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the proclamation of the Weimar Republic. This revolution marked the end of the German Empire and set the stage for significant political and social changes in Germany.



## Chapter 3 - Woodrow Wilson: Architect of Democracy?

### Key Points

#### 1. **Early Life:**

- a. **Birth and Family:** Born in Staunton, Virginia, on December 27-28, 1856. His father was a Presbyterian minister who did not denounce slavery, and his mother was British. The Civil War and Reconstruction influenced his views on race relations and handling defeated nations.
- b. **Education and Early Career:** Attended Davidson College, transferred to Princeton, and enrolled at the University of Virginia Law School but did not complete his studies. He later earned a Ph.D. in history and political science from Johns Hopkins University.

#### 2. **Academic Career and Princeton Presidency:**

- a. **Early Academic Positions:** Taught at Bryn Mawr College and Wesleyan University before joining Princeton in 1890. He reformed Princeton's academic structure and promoted a liberal arts curriculum.
- b. **Challenges and Achievements:** Became president of Princeton in 1902. Faced resistance while trying to democratize the university and eliminate exclusive clubs. Actively discouraged black students from applying.

#### 3. **Political Career:**

- a. **Governor of New Jersey:** Elected in 1910. Introduced significant reforms, including financial disclosure standards and public utility reforms, establishing his reputation as a progressive leader.
- b. **Presidential Election of 1912:** Won the multi-candidate race against Theodore Roosevelt, incumbent President Taft, and Eugene Debs. Introduced major reforms like the federal income tax, Federal Reserve, and Federal Trade Commission.

#### 4. **World War I and Its Aftermath:**

- a. **Neutrality and Entry into the War:** Initially maintained American neutrality in 1914, but events like the Zimmerman

Telegram pushed the U.S. into the war. Issued the 14 Points outlining his vision for post-war peace.

- b. **Versailles Conference and League of Nations:** Key figure in forming the League of Nations, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. However, the U.S. did not join the League, complicating his vision for post-war order.

5. **Racial Legacy:**

- a. **Racial Policies:** Implemented racist policies and political appointments. Segregated military units and civil service, undermining civil rights progress for African Americans.
- b. **Impact on Civil Rights:** His actions contributed to a regressive racial climate, leading to criticism from civil rights activists like W.E.B. DuBois.

## Overview

Chapter 3 examines the complex legacy of Woodrow Wilson, focusing on his life, career, and contributions. It highlights his early life and education, transformative role at Princeton, progressive political reforms as governor and president, and his leadership during World War I. The chapter also addresses Wilson's controversial racial policies and their impact on civil rights. The debate over Wilson's legacy continues due to the contrasting aspects of his achievements and shortcomings.

## Early Life

### Birth and Family

Woodrow Wilson was born between 11 PM and 1 AM on the night of December 27-28, 1856, in Staunton, Virginia. His father was a Presbyterian minister, and his mother was British. Wilson's father, known as one of the more liberal southern religious figures, did not denounce slavery because it was not forbidden in the scriptures, stating that "man could not forbid what God could not." The Civil War and Reconstruction were pivotal events in

Wilson's childhood, influencing his handling of defeated nations later in life. The racial issues in Virginia during that time also shaped young Wilson's perspectives on race relations.

## Education and Early Career

Wilson attended Davidson College but transferred to the College of New Jersey, later known as Princeton. Afterward, he enrolled at the University of Virginia Law School but did not complete his studies. He then moved to Atlanta, where he studied law independently and passed the bar. However, he found practicing law unfulfilling and enrolled at Johns Hopkins University in 1883, where he earned a Ph.D. in history and political science. Around this time, he married Ellen Louise Axson, with whom he had three daughters.

## Academic Career and Princeton Presidency

### Early Academic Positions

Wilson began his academic career at Bryn Mawr College for women, despite his disdain for female scholars at the time. He then taught at Wesleyan University before joining Princeton in 1890 to teach political economy. Princeton, then considered a playground for the wealthy, underwent significant reforms under Wilson's influence. He transformed it into a serious academic institution by reorganizing the academic structure and promoting a liberal arts curriculum that combined sciences with humanities.

### Challenges and Achievements

In 1902, Wilson became president of Princeton. His attempts to democratize the university and eliminate exclusive clubs met with resistance, especially from alumni. Despite these challenges, his academic reforms were successful, significantly raising Princeton's academic standing. However, Princeton also had

racial issues, and Wilson actively discouraged black students from applying to maintain peace among white students and alumni.

## Political Career

### Governor of New Jersey

In 1910, Wilson ran for governor of New Jersey, insisting on a free hand in policy issues. He quickly took on the state's political machine, introducing reforms such as financial disclosure standards, outlawing corporate contributions to political campaigns, and reforming public utilities. His progressive agenda and success as governor positioned him as a viable presidential candidate.

### Presidential Election of 1912

The 1912 Democratic Convention, the first to use primaries, nominated Wilson as its candidate. The election was a multi-candidate race, with Wilson emerging victorious over Theodore Roosevelt, incumbent President Taft, and Eugene Debs. Wilson's presidency saw major reforms, including the establishment of the federal income tax, the Federal Reserve, and the Federal Trade Commission, as well as the National Park Service Act and the 8-hour workday. However, he is most remembered for his role during World War I.

## World War I and Its Aftermath

### Neutrality and Entry into the War

Initially, Wilson maintained American neutrality when World War I broke out in 1914. However, events such as the Zimmerman Telegram and unrestricted submarine warfare pushed the United States towards involvement. Despite his initial reluctance, Wilson

led the country through the war, issuing his famous 14 Points, which outlined his vision for post-war peace.

## Versailles Conference and the League of Nations

At the Versailles Conference in 1919, Wilson played a key role in forming the League of Nations, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. However, the United States did not join the League, and Wilson's vision for the post-war world faced significant challenges.

## Racial Legacy

### Racial Policies

Wilson's racial legacy is complex and controversial. Historians have pointed out consistent examples of his racist policies and political appointments. While his War Department drafted black men and paid them the same as whites, it organized them into segregated units with white commanders. Civil rights activist W.E.B. DuBois, who initially supported Wilson, later criticized his administration for implementing Jim Crow legislation and discrimination in civil service.

### Impact on Civil Rights

Wilson's actions and policies contributed to a regressive racial climate, undermining civil rights progress for African Americans. His stance on segregation and his administration's practices left a lasting impact on racial relations in the United States.

## Conclusion

Woodrow Wilson remains a figure of great complexity. His achievements in education, progressive reforms, and his role in World War I are significant, but they are overshadowed by his racial policies and the contradictions in his leadership. The debate about his legacy continues, reflecting the multifaceted nature of his contributions and shortcomings.

## Chapter 4 - Wilson's 14 Points

### Key Point

#### 1. Introduction to Wilson's Fourteen Points:

- a. Presented on January 8, 1918, by Woodrow Wilson, these principles aimed to establish lasting peace following World War I. They were designed to address the causes of the war and outline a framework for a just and stable international order.

### Overview

Chapter 4 explores Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, presented as a proposal for world peace during World War I. These Points were designed to address the war's causes and outline a framework for a just and stable international order. Key points included open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, removal of trade barriers, reduction of armaments, fair adjustment of colonial claims, and the formation of the League of Nations. Wilson's Points aimed to establish lasting peace and prevent future conflicts, influencing the Treaty of Versailles and marking a significant step in international diplomacy.

### Wilson's Fourteen Points

Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points were a proposal for world peace that was presented during a speech to Congress. The Points were intended to ensure peace and prevent future conflicts by addressing the root causes of World War I.

*Point 1: Open Diplomacy*

All international agreements should be openly negotiated and transparently made, without any secret treaties. This aimed to prevent the hidden alliances and agreements that had contributed to the war.

*Point 2: Freedom of the Seas*

There should be absolute freedom of navigation on the seas during both peace and war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

*Point 3: Removal of Trade Barriers*

The removal of economic barriers and establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

*Point 4: Reduction of Armaments*

National armaments should be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety, to lessen the possibility of military aggression.

*Point 5: Adjustment of Colonial Claims*

A fair and impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, with the interests of the populations concerned given equal weight with the claims of the colonial powers.

*Point 6: Russian Sovereignty*

The evacuation of all Russian territory, allowing Russia the opportunity for self-determination and assistance in finding her own political system.



*Point 7: Preservation of Belgian Sovereignty*

Belgium should be evacuated and restored without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations.

*Point 8: Restoration of French Territory*

All French territory should be freed, and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine should be righted.

*Point 9: Redrawing of Italian Borders*

The frontiers of Italy should be adjusted along clearly recognizable lines of nationality, to ensure a fair division of territories.

*Point 10: Autonomy for Austria-Hungary*

The peoples of Austria-Hungary should be given the freest opportunity for autonomous development.

*Point 11: Independence for Balkan States*

Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia should have free and secure access to the sea; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the Balkan states.

*Point 12: Turkish Sovereignty and Open Dardanelles*

The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but other nationalities under Turkish rule should be assured an opportunity for autonomous development. The Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free

passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

*Point 13: Independent Poland*

An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, with free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

*Point 14: League of Nations*

A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike. This organization would become known as the League of Nations.

## Conclusion

Wilson's Fourteen Points laid the groundwork for post-war peace and were a significant factor in shaping the Treaty of Versailles. The Points emphasized self-determination, economic freedom, and collective security, aiming to create a stable and just world order. Although not all Points were implemented, they marked a significant step towards modern international diplomacy and peacekeeping.

# Chapter 5 - The Collapse of the German War Effort

## Key Points

1. **Initial Strength and Early Setbacks:**
  - a. **German Army's Power:** Germany entered World War I with a formidable army but faced defeat by November 1918.
  - b. **The Schlieffen Plan:** Germany's initial war strategy failed due to overestimation and neglecting logistics, leading to a prolonged war after the Battle of the Marne.
2. **Strategic and Tactical Errors:**
  - a. **Mismanagement:** Germany failed to reassess strategies post-1914 defeats and made critical errors such as the Verdun offensive and ineffective tactics on the Somme.
  - b. **Food and Allies Mismanagement:** The Allied blockade led to food shortages. Mismanagement of alliances, such as Austria-Hungary's uncoordinated operations and Kaiser Karl's secret peace talks, weakened Germany's position.
  - c. **Political and Military Failures:** Ineffective governance, the renewal of unrestricted submarine warfare, and bringing the United States into the war further strained Germany's resources and position.
3. **Military Efforts and Final Gambles:**
  - a. **Spring Offensives:** Post-Bolshevik revolution, Germany focused on the Western Front. Operation Michael initially succeeded but ultimately stalled, failing to secure a decisive victory.
  - b. **Subsequent Offensives:** Other offensives like Georgette and Blücher-Yorck also failed. Allied superior resource management and combined arms approach outmatched German efforts.
4. **Collapse of Morale and Home Front Unrest:**
  - a. **Troop Morale:** By mid-1918, German troop morale collapsed, with high desertion and surrender rates.
  - b. **Home Front Revolution:** Internal unrest, strikes, and navy mutinies highlighted widespread war-weariness. Public

sentiment turned against the Kaiser, leading to his abdication and exile.

5. **Political Failures and Consequences:**

- a. **Governance Issues:** The military dictatorship from 1916 struggled with governance, insisting on maximalist war aims, contrasting with allies' desire for peace.
- b. **Strategic Miscalculations:** Germany's occupation of Eastern Europe drained resources without yielding expected benefits.

6. **The Final Collapse:**

- a. **Military and Political Admissions:** By late 1918, Germany's military leadership admitted defeat and sought an armistice. The myth of a "stab in the back" falsely blamed internal betrayal for the defeat, ignoring comprehensive military and political failures.

7. **Aftermath:**

- a. **Learning from History:** The Allies in 1945 did not repeat the mistakes of 1918, ensuring total victory by pushing into Germany, influenced by the lessons from World War I.

## Overview

Chapter 5 discusses the collapse of the German war effort in World War I. Initially powerful, Germany's military faced critical setbacks due to strategic errors, ineffective governance, and mismanagement of alliances and resources. The failed Spring Offensives, coupled with the collapse of troop morale and home front unrest, led to Germany's defeat. Political failures and insistence on maximalist war aims further strained the nation. By late 1918, Germany sought an armistice, and the "stab in the back" myth emerged, ignoring the true causes of defeat. The chapter concludes with the Allies learning from these failures, ensuring a total victory in World War II.

## The Initial Position

### The German Army's Strength

The German Empire entered the First World War in August 1914 with the world's most powerful army. However, by November 1918, Germany had to sign an armistice on Allied terms, and a revolution had replaced the Empire with a republic. The explanation for Germany's defeat in the final year of the war goes beyond numerical superiority. While the Allies had more men and resources, several strategic mistakes by Germany contributed significantly to its downfall.

### The Schlieffen Plan and Early Setbacks

Germany's war plan in 1914, the Schlieffen Plan, represented its best chance to win against a stronger enemy alliance. Yet, as Helmuth von Moltke the Elder once noted, "No plan of operations extends with certainty beyond the first encounter with the enemy's main strength." This lesson was learned the hard way by the German high command during the initial months of the war. Overestimating their capabilities and neglecting logistics, German planners faced a resolute French resistance at the Marne, ensuring the war would not end swiftly. Violating Belgian neutrality further complicated matters by drawing Britain into the war.

## Strategic and Tactical Errors

### Mismanagement and Operational Failures

Despite early setbacks, the Central Powers were not necessarily destined for total defeat. However, several critical errors between 1914 and 1917 further jeopardized their position:

- The High Command failed to effectively reassess its strategy after the 1914 defeats and develop a coherent plan to force acceptable peace terms.
- The army squandered manpower in the failed Verdun offensive and ineffective defensive tactics on the Somme in 1916.
- Food production could not compensate for the Allied blockade's effects.
- Mismanagement of alliances, exemplified by Austria-Hungary's uncoordinated military operations and Kaiser Karl's secret peace talks, weakened their position.
- Ineffective governance, with the Kaiser playing a significant but weak role, and the military interfering in politics and the economy, further strained resources.
- The 1917 renewal of unrestricted submarine warfare backfired, failing to knock Britain out of the war and bringing the United States into it.

## Military Successes and Missteps

Despite some successes against Russia, Serbia, Romania, and Italy, Germany's errors compounded over time. The Allies' mistakes, such as inefficient resource use and disastrous offensives, were less detrimental due to their numerical and material superiority. Once the US joined in 1917, the Allies' prospects improved, while the German high command admitted by late 1916 that they could not defeat the Allies in the West.

## The Final Gamble

### The Spring Offensives

Germany's last opportunity to avoid defeat came with the Bolshevik revolution in late 1917. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in early 1918 allowed Germany to focus on the Western Front, with

American troops not yet in large numbers in France. The German army launched Operation Michael on March 21, 1918, against the British 5th Army. Despite initial successes, including capturing 75,000 prisoners and significant territorial gains, the offensive ultimately stalled by April 5.

## Continued Offensives and Allied Resistance

Subsequent offensives, including Operations Georgette, Blücher-Yorck, Gneisenau, and Friedensturm, failed to secure decisive victories. The Allies, led by General Ferdinand Foch, effectively pooled their reserves and launched counteroffensives. The Allies' combined arms approach, superior technology, and resource management outmatched German innovations in weaponry.

## The Collapse of Morale

### Desertion and Surrender

By mid-1918, German morale had deteriorated significantly. High desertion rates and increasing surrenders highlighted the troops' loss of hope. British intelligence noted this shift in prisoner interrogations. The failed offensives, severe casualties, and internal strife accelerated the army's disintegration.

## The Home Front and Revolution

Simultaneously, internal unrest and revolution gripped Germany. Workers' strikes and navy mutinies reflected widespread war-weariness. The public turned against the Kaiser and military leadership, leading to Wilhelm's abdication and exile. Allied propaganda, better labor relations, and the morale boost from American troop arrivals ensured their resilience.

## Political Failures and Consequences

### Governance and Strategic Miscalculations

From 1916, Germany's military dictatorship struggled with governance. The high command's inflexibility and insistence on maximalist war aims, like annexing Belgium and parts of France, contrasted with their allies' desire for peace. The Allies coordinated their strategies more effectively, while Germany's occupation of Eastern Europe drained resources without yielding expected benefits.

### The Final Collapse

Germany's coercive governance, failure to support allies, and mismanagement of crises culminated in their collapse. By late 1918, the military leadership admitted defeat, and Germany sought an armistice. The myth of a "stab in the back," later propagated by Ludendorff and the Nazis, falsely blamed internal betrayal for the defeat, ignoring the comprehensive military and political failures.

### Aftermath

In 1945, the Allies did not repeat the mistakes of 1918, pushing into Germany to ensure total victory. The lessons of World War I influenced the strategies that ultimately led to the Third Reich's downfall.



# Chapter 6 - The Formation and Downfall of the Bavarian Soviet Republic

## Key Points

1. **Background:**
  - a. Establishment of the Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1919, alongside Russia and Hungary.
  - b. Overthrow of the Bavarian monarchy and establishment of a People's State of Bavaria in 1918.
2. **Political Chaos and Assassination:**
  - a. January elections lost by Eisner's government; Eisner assassinated in February.
  - b. Bavarian Soviet Republic declared on April 6, 1919, by Munich's Soldiers' and Workers' Council.
  - c. Initial support and radical reforms by revolutionary leaders like Erich Mühsam and Ernst Niekisch.
3. **Establishment of the Soviet Republic:**
  - a. Radical policies: nationalization of banks and companies, abolition of capitalism, student-led universities.
  - b. Opposition from conservative rural population and failed Palm Sunday Putsch coup attempt.
4. **Military Struggle:**
  - a. Government counterattacks: defeat of government troops at Dachau, Freikorpsmen joining the fight.
  - b. Atrocities: massacres by government forces and executions by Soviet radicals.
5. **Collapse and Aftermath:**
  - a. Government artillery ends resistance by May 1, 1919, with significant casualties.
  - b. Continued violence post-collapse, including the massacre of innocent Catholics by Freikorpsmen.
  - c. Long-term implications: reliance on Freikorps and their uncontrollable violence impacting Weimar Germany.

## Overview

Chapter 6 outlines the brief and tumultuous existence of the Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1919. Following World War I, Bavaria saw significant political upheaval, leading to the declaration of a Soviet Republic amidst widespread instability in Germany. The chapter details the chaotic political environment, marked by the assassination of Kurt Eisner and the subsequent declaration of the Soviet Republic by Munich's Soldiers' and Workers' Council.

## Background

### The Birth of the Bavarian Soviet Republic

In the spring of 1919, for a brief period, there existed a third Soviet territory in the world, in addition to Russia and Hungary – the Bavarian Soviet Republic. Bavaria, since its incorporation into Germany in 1871, maintained its own local government and monarchy. However, the armistice and revolution in November 1918 led to significant changes. The monarchy was overthrown, and an Independent Social Democratic government under Kurt Eisner declared the People's State of Bavaria, which remained part of Germany.

Early 1919 saw widespread instability across Germany. The Spartacus Uprising in Berlin, the brief Soviet Republic in Bremen, and escalating violence during a general strike in Berlin marked a period of significant turmoil. The Hungarian declaration of a Soviet Republic on March 21st further inspired revolutionaries in Munich. Erich Mühsam, a revolutionary poet, noted, "The news from Hungary hit Munich like a bomb" (Gerwarth, 128).

## Political Chaos and Assassination

The political landscape in Bavaria was chaotic. The Eisner government had lost the January elections, and Eisner himself was assassinated by a nationalist aristocrat in February. On April 6, 1919, the Soldiers' and Workers' Council of Munich declared Bavaria a Soviet Republic, forcing the elected government to flee. Many believed this was the final phase of a full German revolution. Thomas Mann, a resident of Munich at the time, noted on April 7th, "It may be assumed that the rest of Germany will follow" (Gerwarth, 129). Support from Russian Bolsheviks further fueled revolutionary aspirations, though this support was ultimately ineffective.

## Establishment of the Soviet Republic

### Initial Reforms and Policies

The Bavarian Soviet Republic was characterized by radical reforms, including the nationalization of banks and companies, the abolition of capitalism, and allowing students to run universities. These policies found little support outside Munich's intellectual circles. Bavaria's deeply conservative and rural population was largely opposed to a government led by urban, Jewish intellectuals like Erich Mühsam and Ernst Niekisch.

### Failed Coup and Escalation

On April 12 and 13, troops loyal to the exiled Bavarian government and nationalist volunteers from the Thule Society attempted a coup, known as the Palm Sunday Putsch. Although the coup failed, it radicalized both sides. Russian emigres Max Levien and Eugen Leviné took over the Soviet, introducing more extreme policies. Despite these tensions, internal violence was mitigated by moderate socialists and effective revolutionary courts (Jones, 308).

## The Military Struggle

### Government Counterattacks

Government troops attacked the Soviet Republic on April 18 but were defeated by the Bavarian Red Army at Dachau. This defeat prompted Prime Minister Hoffmann to call for volunteers, resulting in thousands of Freikorpsmen, including future Nazi Ernst Röhm, joining the government forces. The offensive resumed, and by April 27, the Soviet Republic was on the verge of collapse.

### Atrocities and Reprisals

As the situation deteriorated, violence spiraled out of control. Soviet radicals took hostages, and government troops responded with massacres. On April 29, government forces killed 30 civilians and executed 53 Russian POWs suspected of revolutionary sympathies (Jones, 313). Social Democrat Minister Gustav Noske's Schiessbefehl, or shooting order, allowed government soldiers and Freikorpsmen to execute suspected rebels on the spot.

The violence reached a peak on April 30 when Red Army guards executed hostages, including a female relative of a government commander. These killings were widely publicized and exacerbated the conflict. The Workers' and Soldiers' Council condemned the murders, but their voices were drowned out by the chaos. By May 1, government artillery had broken the Soviet resistance, resulting in between 600 and 1000 deaths (Jones, 296).

## Aftermath and Legacy

### Continued Violence

The end of the Bavarian Soviet Republic did not immediately bring peace. On May 6, Freikorpsmen, acting on false intelligence, massacred 25 innocent Catholics. This incident exemplified the ongoing violence even after the formal end of the conflict. A soldier involved later expressed regret, saying, “Today I am sorry about it. I wanted to do good, I considered it my duty. It’s possible that I struck with my bayonet, but I can’t remember” (Jones, 327).

### Long-term Implications

The Bavarian Soviet Republic lasted just three weeks but left a lasting impact on German memory and politics. It was remembered as a violent and chaotic episode, but it also highlighted the Weimar Government’s reliance on the Freikorps and their uncontrollable violence against their own people. This fateful decision had significant implications for the future of Germany.

# Chapter 7 - The Treaty of Versailles and Its Economic Consequences

## Key Points

1. **Economic Strains of World War I:**
  - a. All belligerent nations faced immense financial strain.
  - b. Germany financed the war through war bonds and faced massive debt by 1918.
  - c. Britain and France, using their empires and banking sectors, also accumulated significant debt and turned to the U.S. for loans.
2. **Post-War Economic Collapse:**
  - a. Europe and the Middle East experienced severe economic collapse and food shortages.
  - b. American Relief Administration helped, but millions remained hungry.
  - c. Britain and France faced economic reconstruction challenges and relied on reparations from Germany.
3. **The Treaty of Versailles:**
  - a. Signed in June 1919, aimed to establish a new European order and included the League of Nations.
  - b. Article 231, the War Guilt Clause, held Germany responsible for war damages, justifying reparations.
4. **John Maynard Keynes's Critique:**
  - a. Keynes opposed heavy reparations, arguing it would destabilize Europe.
  - b. Proposed reducing reparations, forgiving Allied debts, creating an international loan, and restoring trade with Russia.
  - c. Most proposals were ignored, leading to a fragile economic situation.
5. **Economic Musical Chairs:**
  - a. U.S. demanded debt repayment, creating a cycle of loans and repayments between the U.S., Germany, France, and Britain.
  - b. This hindered post-war recovery, particularly in Germany.
6. **Political and Economic Consequences in Germany:**

- a. Economic hardships and resentment of the Treaty of Versailles weakened the Weimar Republic.
  - b. Conditions favored the rise of extremist groups like the National Socialists.
7. **Divergent Historical Views:**
- a. Critics of Keynes argued the treaty did not predetermine the 1930s crises.
  - b. Some believed Keynes focused too narrowly on economic aspects, ignoring political realities.

## Overview

Chapter 7 examines the financial strains of World War I, detailing how Germany, Britain, and France incurred immense debt and economic instability. The Treaty of Versailles, signed in June 1919, aimed to create a new European order but controversially imposed heavy reparations on Germany, which John Maynard Keynes criticized, warning it would destabilize Europe.

## Economic Strains of World War I

### Wartime Financial Strategies

The First World War was not only a total war in military terms but also demanded total economic and industrial mobilization. All belligerent nations faced immense financial strain, pushing their economies to the brink. Early in the conflict, Germany attempted to finance the war through short-term tax increases, but its federal system limited the central government's control over taxation in federal states. Consequently, taxation covered only 14 percent of war costs (Ferguson 115). The remainder was financed through *Kriegsanleihen* (war bonds), which saw considerable success initially. Germany even lent money to its Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman allies. However, by 1918, Germany's war debt constituted over 90 percent of total government expenditure.

## Economic Challenges in Britain and France

Britain and France, leveraging their larger empires, more developed banking sectors, and access to global trade, faced the economic strains of war more effectively than Germany. Nonetheless, their spending soared, and debt accumulated rapidly. France, initially hoping to self-finance through taxation and war bonds, had to borrow from Britain. When Britain exhausted its reserves, it turned to American lenders. By 1917, the U.S. government began issuing loans directly to Britain to purchase food and munitions. By 1918, Britain's imports from the U.S. were quadruple their 1914 levels, while its exports dwindled (Horn 87).

## Post-War Economic Collapse

### Food Shortages and Economic Disarray

Following the war, much of Europe and the Middle East experienced total economic collapse. Severe food shortages threatened millions with famine, particularly in regions where fighting continued into 1919 and 1920. The American Relief Administration was dispatched to oversee food distribution to 23 countries, including war-torn Russia, with a budget of 100 million USD (1.5 billion USD in 2020 money), supplemented by private donations. Despite these efforts, millions remained hungry.

### Debts and Reparations

Britain and France, heavily indebted and with weakened empires, faced the daunting task of economic reconstruction. Their lenders, primarily the United States, demanded repayment. To address their economic woes, the Allies turned to Germany for reparations, leveraging the Treaty of Versailles to enforce payments.



## The Treaty of Versailles

### Establishing a New Order

The Treaty of Versailles, signed in June 1919, aimed to establish a new order in Europe and the world. It introduced the League of Nations, redrew borders, mandated demilitarization, and imposed colonial mandates. One of the most controversial aspects was Article 231, the War Guilt Clause, which justified reparations by holding Germany responsible for the war's damage. The treaty acknowledged Germany's inability to pay for all damages but required compensation for civilian and government property losses (Peace Treaty of Versailles, Part VIII – Article 232, page 138).

### Determining Reparations

The exact amount of reparations was to be decided by the inter-allied Reparation Commission. For the victorious powers, especially France, reparations were crucial for their own recovery and reconstruction. The treaty, therefore, was not just about ending the war and territorial changes but also had significant economic implications for post-war Europe.

## John Maynard Keynes's Critique

### Opposition to Heavy Reparations

John Maynard Keynes, a British economist and representative at the Paris Peace Conference, strongly opposed the imposition of heavy reparations on Germany. He argued for leniency, believing that the continent was an interconnected economic unit. High reparations would disrupt this ecosystem, leading to dangerous consequences. Disillusioned, Keynes resigned from his position and published *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* in December 1919, a scathing critique of the treaty and its architects.

## Keynes's Proposals

Keynes proposed four key revisions: reducing reparations payments, forgiving Allied debts to the United States, creating an international loan for reconstruction, and restoring trade relations with Russia. Despite his book's success, most of his recommendations were ignored. While reparations were eventually reduced, and some loans were provided for redevelopment, Russia remained isolated, and the U.S. demanded debt repayment.

## Economic Musical Chairs

### Debt Repayment and Economic Fragility

The U.S. demanded that loans be repaid in hard currency, leading to a complex web of debt repayment among the Allies. Germany, unable to meet its reparation payments, turned to the U.S. for loans. This created a cycle where American money flowed to Germany for reparations, which then flowed to France and Britain, and back to the U.S. This fragile economic situation hindered post-war recovery, particularly in Germany.

## Political and Economic Consequences in Germany

Germany's economic hardships and resentment of the Treaty of Versailles had severe political consequences. The birth of the Weimar Republic was marked by economic chaos, inflation, unemployment, and the liquidation of personal savings. Political violence became common, weakening the political center and empowering extremist groups like the Communists and National Socialists. Journalist-historian William Shirer noted that such conditions were "heaven-sent for Adolf Hitler" (Shirer 62).

## Divergent Historical Views

### Keynes's Critics

While Keynes's critique of the Treaty of Versailles was influential, it was not without its critics. Some historians argued that the treaty did not predetermine Europe's fate in the 1930s, questioning Keynes's claim that reparations were excessively high. Others criticized him for focusing too narrowly on economic utilitarianism while ignoring the political realities of post-war Europe, where voters in Britain and France demanded Germany's punishment.

# Chapter 8 - Turmoil in the Early Weimar Republic: The Kapp Putsch and its Aftermath

## Key Points

1. **Treaty of Versailles and Military Discontent:**
  - a. The Treaty imposed strict military limitations, leading to unrest among the military and right-wing factions, particularly the disbandment of the Freikorps.
2. **Prelude to the Coup:**
  - a. Tensions between the military and government peaked with the planned dissolution of the Marinebrigade Ehrhardt, leading to General von Lüttwitz's ultimatum and the subsequent coup attempt.
3. **The Kapp Putsch:**
  - a. On March 13, 1920, the Marinebrigade Ehrhardt captured Berlin, and a new government was declared by the putschists, led by Wolfgang Kapp.
4. **Collapse of the Coup:**
  - a. A massive general strike paralyzed the coup, leading to its failure by March 18, 1920, and the restoration of the republican government.
5. **Aftermath and Ruhr Uprising:**
  - a. The Kapp Putsch sparked a leftist uprising in the Ruhr region, where the Ruhr Red Army seized control, leading to intense conflict with government forces.
6. **Broader Implications:**
  - a. The events highlighted the fragile state of the Weimar Republic, deep political divisions, and set the stage for future conflicts.

## Overview

Chapter 8 details the political instability and violence in Germany following the Treaty of Versailles. The Treaty's stringent military limitations and the planned dissolution of the Freikorps incited discontent, culminating in the Kapp Putsch on March 13, 1920, where right-wing forces briefly captured Berlin. A massive general strike led to the coup's failure by March 18. The coup's failure triggered the Ruhr Uprising, where the leftist Ruhr Red Army took control of the industrial region, leading to intense conflict with government forces. These events underscored the Weimar Republic's precarious position and deep political divisions, foreshadowing future instability and the eventual rise of extremist movements in Germany.

## The Treaty of Versailles and Military Discontent

In early 1920, Germany grappled with political instability and violence, rooted in the aftermath of the November 1918 revolution. The tension between the military and civilian government over the Treaty of Versailles was a catalyst for the next major crisis: the Kapp Putsch. The Treaty of Versailles, effective from January 10, 1920, imposed stringent limitations on Germany's military capabilities, reducing the army to 100,000 men and the navy to 15,000, and prohibiting modern warfare technologies like tanks, submarines, and aircraft. These restrictions were unacceptable to many in the military and on the political right.

The Reichswehr, Germany's armed forces, faced significant challenges in meeting the treaty requirements. The officer corps opposed both the reductions and the new Social Democrat government. The Treaty also demanded the dissolution of the Freikorps, right-wing paramilitary militias composed mainly of World War I veterans. Estimates of Freikorps membership

ranged from 500,000 to 1.5 million, with over 100 units in January 1919. The Freikorps had played a crucial role in quelling leftist uprisings, such as the Spartacist Uprising and the Bavarian Soviet Republic, with the Social Democrat government's approval, due to their strong anti-socialist sentiments. Disarming the well-armed Freikorps proved challenging, setting the stage for a confrontation between the government and the military.

## Prelude to the Coup

On February 29, 1920, Army Minister Gustav Noske announced that the republic would adhere to the Treaty of Versailles' restrictions. Chief of Staff Hans von Seeckt supported this decision, but many top generals, including General Walther Freiherr von Lüttwitz, opposed it. Von Lüttwitz, in command of troops around Berlin, had played significant roles in post-war violence and was a prominent supporter of the Freikorps. He sought to pressure Noske into reversing the decision.

On March 10, von Lüttwitz and Noske met to discuss the situation. Noske, however, ordered the dissolution of the 5,000-strong Freikorps Marinebrigade Ehrhardt, a staunchly monarchist unit based near Berlin. Outraged, von Lüttwitz issued an ultimatum demanding new elections and his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the army. Noske refused, prompting von Lüttwitz to conspire with other military figures, including General Erich Ludendorff and Waldemar Pabst, to attempt a coup.

## The Kapp Putsch Unfolds

On March 13, 1920, the Marinebrigade Ehrhardt marched on Berlin, capturing the government quarter without resistance. The coup leaders, including von Lüttwitz and Wolfgang Kapp, declared a new government. Kapp, a Prussian civil servant and monarchist, was chosen as the coup's civilian face. The putschists aimed to

establish an authoritarian state and reverse the peace settlement.

Despite their initial success, the coup faced immediate challenges. Workers' councils and union leaders called for a general strike, beginning on March 15. The strike, the largest in German history, saw 12 million workers refusing to work and millions protesting. The strike paralyzed daily life, revealing the coup's lack of popular support and making organization difficult. The regular army's refusal to support the coup further undermined it. Unable to govern and stripped of support, the putschists negotiated with the fled government for amnesty in exchange for stepping down. By March 18, the coup had collapsed, and the republican government resumed control.

## Aftermath and the Ruhr Uprising

The coup's failure did not end the unrest. In Westphalia, the heavily industrialized mining region with a strong working-class movement, the Kapp Putsch triggered a leftist uprising. The Ruhr Red Army, composed of 50,000 to 100,000 workers, took control of the region, demanding extensive social reforms. The restored government perceived these demands as a threat and dispatched security forces to reassert control.

Skirmishes erupted, and by March 18, the Red Army had captured key cities like Düsseldorf and Essen. Government troops, backed by Freikorps, eventually suppressed the uprising, but the clashes highlighted the deep political divisions in Germany. The coup and subsequent uprising revealed the fragile nature of the Weimar Republic and the volatile alliances within German politics.

## Broader Implications

The events of early 1920 underscored the Weimar Republic's precarious position. The Kapp Putsch and the Ruhr Uprising highlighted the intense opposition from both the radical left and right, challenging the government's ability to maintain order. These events set the stage for future conflicts and underscored the need for political stability in the nascent republic. The Weimar Republic's struggle to navigate these challenges would continue to shape Germany's interwar period.

## The Ruhr Red Army and Further Unrest

### *Leftist Uprising*

The Kapp Putsch of 1920 ignited a leftist uprising in the Ruhr region, where the Communist Party of Germany mobilized support for the formation of the Ruhr Red Army. This armed organization, which comprised between 50,000 and 100,000 supporters, quickly took control of the Ruhr area. They successfully defeated local *Freikorps* units and occupied key cities, demonstrating significant military prowess and organizational capability.

### *Government Response*

In response to the escalating crisis, the Weimar government, having regained control, viewed the Ruhr Red Army as a direct challenge to its authority. General Oskar von Watter was tasked with leading government forces to suppress the uprising. Initial attempts at negotiation, including promises of reforms, proved ineffective. Consequently, on April 2, 1920, the government, with the support of the *Freikorps*, launched a military offensive against the Ruhr Red Army. The ensuing conflict was characterized by intense fighting and severe reprisals, underscoring the deep divisions within German society.



### *Consequences*

The suppression of the Ruhr uprising resulted in significant casualties and further exacerbated the political divide in Germany. The Social Democratic government's reliance on the *Freikorps* to quell the uprising alienated many of its working-class supporters, thereby strengthening radical leftist factions. The Weimar Republic remained fragile, plagued by ongoing political violence and instability. This period of unrest set the stage for future conflicts and contributed to the eventual rise of extremist movements, highlighting the precarious nature of interwar Germany's political landscape.

### *Conclusion*

The early years of the Weimar Republic were marred by political turbulence and violence, as illustrated by the Kapp Putsch and the subsequent Ruhr uprising. The government's reliance on right-wing paramilitary forces to maintain order highlighted the deep divisions within German society and foreshadowed the challenges that would continue to plague the Republic in the interwar period.

## Chapter 9 - The Role of Freikorps in the Early Weimar Republic

### Key Points

1. **Origins and Composition:**
  - a. The Freikorps were right-wing paramilitary groups formed from disillusioned WWI veterans, characterized by nationalist, anti-communist ideologies.
  - b. They operated independently but often collaborated with the regular army and government.
2. **Actions During Early Weimar Republic:**
  - a. **Spartacist Uprising (January 1919):** The Freikorps brutally suppressed the communist uprising, resulting in the deaths of key leaders.
  - b. **Bavarian Soviet Republic (April 1919):** They crushed the socialist state in Munich through fierce fighting.
  - c. **Kapp Putsch (March 1920):** The Freikorps attempted a coup to establish a right-wing regime, which failed due to a general strike and lack of army support.
3. **The Ruhr Conflict:**
  - a. **Ruhr Uprising (March-April 1920):** The Freikorps suppressed the leftist Ruhr Red Army with extreme violence, highlighting political tensions and deep societal divisions.
4. **Legacy and Significance:**
  - a. The Freikorps' actions had a lasting impact on German politics, undermining the Weimar government and contributing to the rise of the Nazi Party.
  - b. Their decline in the mid-1920s saw many members join the Nazi movement, bringing military experience and ideological fervor.

### Overview

Chapter 9 examines the significant impact of the Freikorps, right-wing paramilitary groups formed from WWI veterans, on post-war Germany. These groups, characterized by nationalist and anti-

communist ideologies, played key roles in suppressing leftist uprisings, such as the Spartacist Uprising and the Bavarian Soviet Republic, often using brutal tactics. They were also involved in the failed Kapp Putsch, an attempted coup to establish a right-wing regime. The Freikorps' suppression of the Ruhr Uprising further highlighted deep political tensions. Their actions undermined the legitimacy of the Weimar government and set a precedent for the paramilitary culture later embraced by the Nazi Party. As the Weimar Republic stabilized, many Freikorps members joined the Nazi movement, contributing to the radicalization of German politics and the eventual rise of Adolf Hitler.

### *Introduction*

In the tumultuous period following World War I, the *Freikorps* played a significant role in shaping the early Weimar Republic. These right-wing paramilitary groups, composed mainly of Great War veterans, were involved in various conflicts and political actions, often acting as both enforcers of state authority and perpetrators of violence. Their actions had a profound impact on the political landscape of post-war Germany.

## Origins and Composition

### *Formation and Ideology*

The *Freikorps* were formed in the immediate aftermath of World War I, largely from demobilized soldiers and officers who were disillusioned with the **Treaty of Versailles** and opposed to the socialist government. These groups were characterized by their nationalist, anti-communist, and militaristic ideologies. They saw themselves as defenders of Germany against both internal and external enemies.

By January 1919, there were over 100 *Freikorps* units, with estimates of their total strength ranging from 500,000 to 1.5 million members. These units operated independently, but they often collaborated with the regular army and the government in suppressing leftist uprisings and maintaining order.

## **Actions During the Early Weimar Republic**

### *Spartacist Uprising (January 1919)*

The *Freikorps* were instrumental in crushing the *Spartacist Uprising* in Berlin, which was led by the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and the Spartacus League. With the tacit approval of the Social Democrat government, the *Freikorps* brutally suppressed the uprising, resulting in the deaths of key communist leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who were executed by *Freikorps* members.

### *Bavarian Soviet Republic (April 1919)*

The *Freikorps* played a crucial role in the suppression of the Bavarian Soviet Republic, a short-lived socialist state established in Munich. They engaged in fierce street fighting and reprisals against the revolutionaries, effectively ending the socialist experiment and restoring order.

### *Kapp Putsch (March 1920)*

The *Freikorps* were at the heart of the Kapp Putsch, a failed coup attempt led by Wolfgang Kapp and General Walther von Lüttwitz aimed at overthrowing the Weimar government and establishing a right-wing authoritarian regime. Although the putsch ultimately failed due to a general strike called by workers and a lack of support from the regular army, the involvement of the *Freikorps*

highlighted their willingness to challenge the democratic government.

## The Ruhr Conflict

### *Ruhr Uprising (March-April 1920)*

In response to the Kapp Putsch, leftist groups in the Ruhr region formed the Ruhr Red Army, leading to a significant uprising. The *Freikorps* were deployed to suppress the Ruhr Red Army. Their actions were marked by extreme violence, including summary executions and reprisals against suspected communists and sympathizers.

### *Impact on the Ruhr Conflict*

The *Freikorps*' brutal tactics during the suppression of the Ruhr uprising exacerbated political tensions and highlighted the deep divisions within German society. Their involvement in the conflict reinforced their reputation as enforcers of state authority, but also as ruthless and unaccountable forces that operated with impunity.

## Legacy and Significance

### *Political Influence*

The *Freikorps*' actions during the early Weimar Republic had a lasting impact on German politics. They played a key role in maintaining order and suppressing leftist movements, but their methods often alienated segments of the population and undermined the legitimacy of the Weimar government. Their association with right-wing extremism and their involvement in violent repression set a precedent for the paramilitary culture that would later be embraced by the Nazi Party.

As the Weimar Republic stabilized in the mid-1920s, the influence of the *Freikorps* waned. Many former members joined the burgeoning Nazi movement, bringing their military experience and ideological fervor to the party. The legacy of the *Freikorps* continued to influence German politics, as their actions during the early post-war years contributed to the radicalization of both the right and the left, ultimately leading to the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Adolf Hitler.

The *Freikorps* were a crucial and controversial force in the early Weimar Republic. Their role in suppressing leftist uprisings and challenging the democratic government underscored the volatility of post-war Germany. While they helped to maintain order in the short term, their actions also deepened societal divisions and paved the way for future conflicts and the eventual rise of extremist movements.

# Chapter 10 - Germany's Covert War

## After World War I

### Key Points

#### 1. **Political and Paramilitary Unrest:**

- a. After the Kapp Putsch in March 1920, a leftist uprising in the Ruhr region continued, led by the Ruhr Red Army.
- b. The Bielefeld Agreement attempted to disarm the Red Army in exchange for policy concessions, but compliance was inconsistent.

#### 2. **Government Response:**

- a. The German Army and Freikorps launched an assault on the Ruhr Red Army, violating the Treaty of Versailles by entering the neutral zone.
- b. The French responded by occupying Frankfurt and other cities, causing further tensions.

#### 3. **The Ruhr Campaign:**

- a. The German Army quickly regained control of the Ruhr region, but the military's actions highlighted the difficulty of civilian control over the army.

#### 4. **International Repercussions:**

- a. The French occupation of Frankfurt and the Spa Conference in July 1920 addressed issues like the reduction of the German army and coal shipment schedules, though reparations remained unresolved.

#### 5. **Upper Silesia Plebiscites:**

- a. Contention over Upper Silesia's future led to paramilitary conflicts, with German and Polish nationalist groups vying for control.

#### 6. **Ongoing Crisis:**

- a. Germany faced internal political instability, with weakened Social Democrats and rising radical leftists and right-wing Freikorps.

## Overview

Chapter 10 describes the political and paramilitary unrest in Germany following the Treaty of Versailles, highlighting the failed Kapp Putsch in March 1920, which led to a leftist uprising in the Ruhr region. The German government's violent suppression by the Freikorps and army violated the treaty, prompting the French occupation of Frankfurt and straining Allied relations. The chapter also addresses the Spa Conference and Upper Silesia plebiscites, illustrating ongoing internal instability and the challenges the Weimar Republic faced in maintaining order and navigating post-war complexities.

## Political and Paramilitary Unrest

### The Aftermath of the Kapp Putsch

Although the Kapp Putsch failed in mid-March 1920, the leftist uprising it triggered in the Ruhr area of Western Germany continued. Various leftist groups, including the Independent Social Democrats, Communists, and others, formed the self-proclaimed Ruhr Red Army. This group engaged in combat with local right-wing Freikorps and defeated them in late March. The Ruhr Red Army controlled parts of the neutral zone, a 50-kilometer-wide strip of land next to the occupied Rhineland where the Treaty of Versailles forbade German forces from entering.

Despite its success, the uprising lacked unity. Its more moderate leaders, recognizing their untenable position, entered negotiations with the German government, dominated by the majority Social Democrats. The resulting Bielefeld Agreement stipulated that the Ruhr Red Army would surrender its weapons in exchange for policy concessions to the workers. However, not all factions complied, with some leaders, like Godfried Kareit,



allegedly acting as agents provocateurs for the German army, refusing to disarm.

## The Government Response

By early April, both the Communists and the Independent Social Democrats had agreed to lay down their arms but sought to continue their revolutionary efforts through other means, such as a general strike. Concurrently, the German Army pressured the government to authorize an attack on the remaining insurgents. On April 1st, the Freikorps launched an assault on the town of Pelkum, killing about 100 people, mostly after they had surrendered.

On April 3rd, the German government, citing non-compliance with the Bielefeld Agreement, ordered the army to attack. This planned advance into the neutral zone violated the Treaty of Versailles, prompting the Germans to seek permission from the Allies. While the British and Americans were indifferent, the French and Belgians opposed the move. The French, still reeling from wartime devastation, mobilized more troops and threatened to occupy Frankfurt and other German towns if the neutral zone were breached. Despite the risk, the German government and army decided to proceed, viewing the suppression of what they considered a Bolshevik uprising as paramount.

## The Ruhr Campaign

The German Army advanced with little resistance, securing control of the region south to the Ruhr River within a week. However, General Oskar von Watter, in command, opposed the government's order to halt at the Ruhr River, illustrating the military's difficulty in accepting civilian control. Eventually, a paramilitary police force known as the Sicherheitspolizei (SiPo) crossed the river to arrest insurgents and collect surrendered

weapons. The Freikorps also crossed the river, marking Jewish-owned businesses and synagogues with swastikas. Thousands of leftists fled, with many seeking refuge in the British occupation zone.

## International Repercussions

### French Occupation of Frankfurt

In response to the German army's violation of the neutral zone, French forces under General Jean-Marie Degoutte occupied Frankfurt and other cities on April 6th, despite British objections. French Prime Minister Alexandre Millerand justified the move as a necessary response to Germany's treaty violations. The occupation sparked significant resentment among German citizens, particularly following a violent incident in Frankfurt where French troops fired on a crowd, killing nine Germans. This event fueled a propaganda campaign vilifying French colonial troops, a tactic echoing wartime rhetoric.

### The Spa Conference

The turmoil in Germany and the temporary French occupation of Frankfurt exacerbated tensions between Germany and the Allies regarding the implementation of the Treaty of Versailles. The interruptions in German coal production and shipment, essential for reparations, added to the strain. These issues were addressed at the Spa Conference in July 1920, the first post-war meeting between the Allies and Germany. The Spa Agreement outlined the reduction of the German army, detailed coal shipment schedules, and allocated reparations percentages among the Allies. However, the total amount of reparations remained undecided.

## The Upper Silesia Plebiscites

### Ethnic and Nationalist Tensions

While the Spa Conference was ongoing, the first of two plebiscites in southern East Prussia took place on July 11th. The regions of Allenstein and Marienwerder voted overwhelmingly to remain with Germany, despite their ethnically mixed populations. The second plebiscite in Upper Silesia, a region claimed by both Germany and Poland, was more contentious due to its valuable mineral resources and mixed linguistic and cultural identity.

### Paramilitary Conflicts

Both German and Polish nationalist groups formed paramilitary organizations, supported by their respective governments, to influence the plebiscite. The first Silesian Uprising in August 1919 was quickly crushed by German forces. In preparation for the plebiscite, Allied forces, including Italian and French troops, moved into Upper Silesia. However, violence persisted, and the second Silesian Uprising broke out in August 1920. Despite efforts by the Italian and French troops to maintain order, paramilitary conflicts continued.

### Ongoing Crisis

As the summer of 1920 drew to a close, Germany remained in crisis. Tensions with the Allies over the Treaty of Versailles persisted, and internal political instability was exacerbated by the weakened position of the majority Social Democrats and the growing strength of radical leftists. The Freikorps militia continued to destabilize the country, and the situation in Upper Silesia remained volatile despite the upcoming plebiscite.

Germany's struggle to navigate the post-war landscape highlighted the profound and far-reaching impacts of the Treaty of

Versailles and the unresolved economic and political issues that continued to plague the Weimar Republic.

## The Significance of the Ruhr Red Army

### Context and Formation

#### *Background*

In the aftermath of Germany's defeat in World War I, the nation faced significant economic hardship, political instability, and social unrest. The **Treaty of Versailles** imposed harsh reparations on Germany, leading to widespread discontent among its populace. The abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the establishment of the Weimar Republic created a power vacuum, with various political factions vying for control.

#### *Formation*

The Ruhr Red Army was formed in March 1920 in response to the Kapp Putsch, a right-wing coup attempt aimed at overthrowing the Weimar government. Composed mainly of workers, the Ruhr Red Army was a paramilitary force organized by left-wing groups, including the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD).

### Key Actions and Events

#### *Combat and Control*

The Ruhr Red Army engaged in combat with right-wing *Freikorps* units and took control of significant parts of the Ruhr region, an industrial heartland of Germany. They managed to defeat the *Freikorps* in several skirmishes and maintained control over parts of the neutral zone, which was supposed to be demilitarized under the **Treaty of Versailles**.

### *Negotiations and Disarmament*

The moderate leaders of the Ruhr Red Army entered negotiations with the Weimar government, resulting in the Bielefeld Agreement. This agreement called for the disarmament of the Red Army in exchange for policy concessions. Despite the agreement, not all factions of the Red Army complied, leading to continued violence and tension in the region.

## Political and Social Impact

### *Threat to the Weimar Republic*

The existence and actions of the Ruhr Red Army posed a significant threat to the stability of the Weimar Republic. It highlighted the deep divisions within German society and the potential for civil conflict. The government's reliance on right-wing paramilitary groups like the *Freikorps* to suppress the Red Army further polarized the political landscape and alienated the working-class base.

### *Shift in Political Dynamics*

The suppression of the Ruhr Red Army and the broader leftist uprisings led to a decline in support for the moderate Social Democrats (SPD) and a corresponding rise in influence for more radical leftist factions, including the USPD and KPD. The Weimar government's actions during this period contributed to the fragmentation of the political left, weakening its overall ability to counter right-wing extremism.

The actions of the Ruhr Red Army and the subsequent military response by the Weimar government also had international repercussions. The use of German military forces in the neutral zone violated the **Treaty of Versailles**, prompting reactions from the Allied powers, particularly France and Belgium. The French occupation of Frankfurt and other cities in response to these violations increased tensions between Germany and the Allies, complicating post-war diplomacy and reparations negotiations.

## Legacy

### *Long-term Consequences*

The legacy of the Ruhr Red Army can be seen in the continued political instability and violence that plagued the Weimar Republic throughout its existence. The events in the Ruhr region exemplified the broader struggles between left and right-wing factions in Germany. The radicalization of the political climate, partly fueled by the actions and suppression of groups like the Ruhr Red Army, set the stage for the eventual rise of extremist movements, including the Nazis.

### *Historical Significance*

The Ruhr Red Army represents a significant episode in the early history of the Weimar Republic, illustrating the challenges faced by the fledgling democratic government in maintaining order and navigating the complex post-war environment. It serves as a reminder of the volatility of revolutionary movements and the profound impact they can have on shaping the political and social trajectories of nations.

## Role of Freikorps in the Ruhr Conflict

The *Freikorps* played a crucial role in the Ruhr conflict, acting as the primary force used by the Weimar government to suppress the left-wing uprisings and restore order in the region. Their involvement had significant implications for the political and social landscape of post-World War I Germany.

### Background and Formation of the Freikorps

#### *Origins*

The *Freikorps* were paramilitary groups composed largely of former soldiers who were disillusioned and demobilized after World War I. These groups were anti-communist and nationalist, often harboring right-wing and conservative ideologies.

#### *Role in Early Weimar Germany*

The Weimar Republic, struggling to maintain order amid widespread social unrest and political instability, relied on the *Freikorps* to combat left-wing revolutionary movements. The *Freikorps* had already been instrumental in suppressing the *Spartacist Uprising* in Berlin in January 1919 and various other leftist uprisings across Germany.

### Involvement in the Ruhr Conflict

#### *Initial Context*

The Ruhr conflict was sparked by the Kapp Putsch in March 1920, a failed coup attempt by right-wing factions, which provoked a leftist uprising in the Ruhr region. The Ruhr Red Army, composed of left-wing workers and soldiers, took control of parts of the Ruhr, defeating local *Freikorps* units and posing a significant threat to the Weimar government.

### *Military Actions*

In response, the Weimar government called upon the *Freikorps* to suppress the Ruhr Red Army. This decision was partly influenced by the regular army's reluctance to engage in large-scale domestic conflict and the government's need for a reliable and experienced fighting force. The *Freikorps* launched a series of offensives against the Ruhr Red Army, engaging in intense and often brutal combat to reclaim territory and dismantle the revolutionary forces.

### *Suppression of the Ruhr Red Army*

The *Freikorps*, along with government troops, managed to defeat the Ruhr Red Army by early April 1920. They reasserted control over the region, capturing key towns and disarming the leftist forces. Their methods were harsh, involving summary executions, mass arrests, and violent reprisals against suspected revolutionaries and sympathizers.

## Political and Social Impact

### *Consolidation of Right-Wing Power*

The successful suppression of the Ruhr Red Army by the *Freikorps* reinforced the power and influence of right-wing paramilitary groups in the Weimar Republic. This reliance on the *Freikorps* alienated many working-class citizens and deepened the divide between the government and leftist factions, contributing to the radicalization of German politics.

### *Weakening of the Social Democrats*

The Social Democratic Party (SPD), which dominated the Weimar government, faced backlash for its reliance on the *Freikorps* to



suppress the Ruhr uprising. This decision was seen as a betrayal by many of their working-class supporters. As a result, the SPD lost significant support in subsequent elections, while more radical leftist groups like the Independent Social Democrats (USPD) and the Communists (KPD) gained influence.

### *Impact on Weimar Stability*

The brutal methods of the *Freikorps* and their anti-communist zeal further destabilized the Weimar Republic. The use of extreme violence and extrajudicial killings created a climate of fear and resentment. The continued presence and activities of the *Freikorps* also undermined the authority of the regular army and the civilian government, contributing to the perception of a weak and ineffective state.

## Long-Term Consequences

### *Rise of Extremist Movements*

The actions of the *Freikorps* in the Ruhr conflict and other uprisings laid the groundwork for the rise of extremist movements in Germany. Many *Freikorps* members later joined the Nazi Party and other far-right organizations, bringing their militant tactics and ideology with them. The experience and networks established by the *Freikorps* during these conflicts helped facilitate the growth of paramilitary groups that played a significant role in the political violence of the Weimar era.

### *Legacy of Violence*

The legacy of the *Freikorps*' involvement in the Ruhr conflict and other suppressions was a deeply entrenched culture of political violence and militancy. This culture persisted throughout the Weimar period and contributed to the eventual collapse of the republic. The polarization and radicalization fostered by the

*Freikorps'* actions made it difficult for moderate political forces to stabilize the country and address the underlying social and economic issues.

## The Kapp Putsch

### *Background*

The Kapp Putsch, which took place in March 1920, was an attempted coup aimed at overthrowing the Weimar Republic and establishing a right-wing autocratic government in Germany. Named after its leader Wolfgang Kapp, the putsch was primarily driven by nationalist and conservative factions, including elements within the military and Freikorps units.

### *Causes*

Several factors contributed to the outbreak of the Kapp Putsch:

1. **Discontent with the Treaty of Versailles:** Many Germans were deeply dissatisfied with the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which they felt humiliated Germany and placed severe economic burdens on the country.
2. **Opposition to the Weimar Republic:** Conservative and nationalist groups opposed the democratic Weimar Republic, which they viewed as weak and illegitimate, blaming it for Germany's defeat in World War I and the subsequent economic and political instability.
3. **Demobilization and Disbanding of Freikorps Units:** The Weimar government's attempts to disband the Freikorps, paramilitary units that had been instrumental in suppressing leftist uprisings, created resentment among these groups. The Freikorps members, many of whom were former soldiers, felt betrayed and feared unemployment and loss of status.

### *The Coup Attempt*

On March 13, 1920, a group of right-wing conspirators, including Wolfgang Kapp, a Prussian civil servant, and General Walther von Lüttwitz, launched their coup. They seized control of Berlin with the support of several Freikorps units and declared a new government with Kapp as Chancellor. The legitimate government, led by President Friedrich Ebert and Chancellor Gustav Bauer, fled to Stuttgart.

### *Government Response and General Strike*

The government called for a general strike to resist the putsch. The strike, which was supported by the Social Democratic Party (SPD), trade unions, and other leftist groups, effectively paralyzed the country. Essential services, including transportation and communication, were disrupted, and widespread non-cooperation made it impossible for the putschists to govern.

### *Collapse of the Putsch*

The general strike quickly undermined the coup. Without broad support from the military, civil servants, or the public, Kapp and his followers found it impossible to maintain control. After only four days, on March 17, 1920, Kapp resigned and fled to Sweden. The legitimate government returned to Berlin, and the putsch was over.

### *Aftermath*

The failure of the Kapp Putsch had several significant consequences:

1. **Strengthening of the Weimar Republic:** The successful defense of the republic through a general strike demonstrated the potential for popular resistance to right-

wing coups. It also reinforced the legitimacy of the Weimar government.

2. **Increased Political Polarization:** The putsch further polarized German politics, intensifying the conflict between right-wing and left-wing factions. It highlighted the vulnerability of the Weimar Republic to both right-wing and left-wing extremist threats.
3. **Prosecution and Leniency:** Although many of the putschists were arrested, they often received lenient sentences. This leniency reflected the judiciary's conservative leanings and the continuing influence of nationalist sentiment within the state apparatus.
4. **Impact on the Military:** The Kapp Putsch exposed divisions within the German military. Some units had supported the putsch, while others remained loyal to the government or stayed neutral. This division underscored the challenges the Weimar Republic faced in gaining the full loyalty of the military.

The Kapp Putsch was a significant early test for the Weimar Republic, highlighting the republic's fragility and the persistent threats from nationalist and conservative factions opposed to democracy.

## The Weimar Government's Response to the Kapp Putsch

### *Immediate Response*

When the Kapp Putsch began on March 13, 1920, the Weimar government's immediate response was to flee Berlin. President Friedrich Ebert, Chancellor Gustav Bauer, and other key

government officials relocated to Stuttgart to avoid capture by the putschists. This temporary evacuation was crucial for maintaining the continuity of the legitimate government.

## Call for a General Strike

The government's primary response strategy was to call for a general strike. President Ebert and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) leadership issued an appeal to the German workers, urging them to strike against the coup. This call was supported by trade unions and other left-wing organizations, leading to a massive and widespread work stoppage.

The general strike effectively paralyzed the country:

- **Transportation Halted:** Railways, trams, and other transportation services ceased to operate, making it difficult for the putschists to maintain logistical support and control.
- **Communication Disrupted:** Telephone and telegraph services were interrupted, isolating the putschists and complicating their efforts to coordinate actions.
- **Public Services Affected:** Essential services, including water supply, electricity, and food distribution, were disrupted, creating a crisis for the putschists.

## *Public and Political Support*

The general strike demonstrated widespread public opposition to the putsch. Workers, civil servants, and many military units refused to cooperate with the Kapp government. The strike gained the support of various political factions, including moderate and left-wing parties, which helped to legitimize the government's call for resistance.

*Military Neutrality and Resistance*

While some elements of the military, particularly the Freikorps units, supported the putsch, the majority of the Reichswehr (German Army) remained neutral. The military's top leadership, including General Hans von Seeckt, refrained from taking decisive action either for or against the putsch, citing the principle of non-interference in political matters. This neutrality, however, indirectly aided the government's cause by preventing a full-scale military endorsement of the putsch.

*Diplomatic Measures*

The Weimar government also sought diplomatic support from the Allies, who were monitoring the situation closely. The Allies, particularly France and Britain, were concerned about the stability of Germany and the potential resurgence of militarism. Their diplomatic pressure and potential threat of intervention discouraged further escalation by the putschists.

*Restoration of Order*

As the general strike crippled the putschists' ability to govern, Wolfgang Kapp and General Walther von Lüttwitz realized their position was untenable. After four days, Kapp resigned and fled to Sweden, and the legitimate government returned to Berlin. The swift collapse of the putsch was a testament to the effectiveness of the general strike and the lack of broad support for the coup.

*Aftermath and Legal Actions*

Following the failure of the putsch, the Weimar government faced the challenge of restoring order and addressing the legal consequences of the coup attempt:

- ❖ **Arrests and Trials:** Key figures involved in the putsch were arrested, but many received lenient sentences. This

leniency reflected the judiciary's conservative bias and the lingering influence of nationalist sentiment.

- ❖ **Political Repercussions:** The government sought to reconcile with moderate political forces and strengthen the democratic framework. However, the putsch deepened political polarization and mistrust between the government and extremist factions on both the right and left.
- ❖ **Military Reforms:** The government attempted to reform the military to ensure greater loyalty to the democratic state. This included measures to reduce the influence of extremist elements within the military and paramilitary organizations.

The Kapp Putsch was a significant challenge for the Weimar Republic, but the government's decisive call for a general strike and the overwhelming public support for democracy played a crucial role in defeating the coup. The event highlighted the fragility of the Weimar Republic and the ongoing threats it faced from both right-wing and left-wing extremists.

# Chapter 11 - The Origins of Germany's Hyperinflation in 1921

## Key Points

### 1. **Post-War Economic Collapse:**

- a. The German Mark's value plummeted after World War I due to wartime financial policies and the Treaty of Versailles.
- b. Germany's economy was crippled by the loss of colonies, continued blockades, and internal instability.

### 2. **London Schedule of Payments:**

- a. In April 1921, the Allies imposed a final reparations bill on Germany, further devaluing the Mark and causing government instability.

### 3. **Political and Economic Stabilization Attempts:**

- a. Temporary stabilization in the summer of 1921 was influenced by the Upper Silesia plebiscite, although the eventual division of the region caused economic disruptions.

### 4. **Taxation and Wealth Disparities:**

- a. The government increased taxes to combat deficits, but wealthy Germans often evaded taxes, exacerbating economic inequality.

### 5. **Social Impact and Currency Collapse:**

- a. The devaluation of the Mark led to social unrest, spending sprees by the wealthy, and increased state deficits, eroding public trust in the currency.

### 6. **Financial Expert Consultations:**

- a. In October 1921, financial experts predicted Germany's impending bankruptcy due to unsustainable economic trends.



## Overview

Chapter 11 outlines the severe economic challenges faced by the Weimar Republic following World War I. The chapter details the collapse of the German Mark, exacerbated by wartime financial policies and the Treaty of Versailles. The April 1921 reparations bill further destabilized the currency, causing political and economic turmoil. Temporary stabilization was attempted through measures like the Upper Silesia plebiscite, but the eventual division of the region disrupted the economy. Taxation efforts failed to curb the deficit as wealthy Germans evaded taxes, increasing economic inequality. The ongoing currency collapse led to social unrest and loss of trust in the government. Financial experts in late 1921 predicted Germany's bankruptcy, foreshadowing the hyperinflation crisis of 1921-1923.

## The Financial Crisis

### Pre-War Stability and Wartime Decisions

Before World War I, the German Mark was a stable and trusted currency, reflecting Germany's robust economic power. However, the strains of total war significantly devalued the Mark, which had lost half its value by 1918. The Imperial German government ceased backing its currency with gold, creating new credit institutes and printing more money to finance the war. This system allowed individuals and companies to take out nearly unlimited credit.

Germany could have mitigated wartime inflation by raising taxes, but this was deemed detrimental to morale. Instead, the government sought funds through war bonds, allowing citizens to lend money to the state. However, the sale of war bonds could not offset the war's financial deficits, leading to continued money printing. By 1917, the amount of money circulating in Germany

was five times higher than in 1913. Critic of the reparations, Hjalmar Schacht, later reflected:

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*“One war bond after another turned most of German private wealth into paper obligations for the state. Our enemies, especially England, chose another path. They financed the war through taxes which mostly impacted industries and groups who profited from the war. English tax policy proved to be more socially just than the German policy of war bonds, which lost their value after the war.”*

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## Post-War Economic Collapse

When the German Empire collapsed and the armistice was signed in November 1918, the financial bubble burst. On November 7, one of the first mass demonstrations in Munich was sparked by a 6-pfennig increase in the price of beer per liter, signaling that the population was already strained by the loss of purchasing power. The post-armistice political and economic crisis further accelerated the Mark's devaluation. Germany's exports suffered due to the loss of colonies, the British blockade (lasting until mid-1919), Allied occupation of the Rhineland, and the loss of industrial regions to Poland and France. Internally, Germany's economy was paralyzed by revolution, counter-revolution, strikes, armed insurrections, and frequent demonstrations. The Mark's value continued to plummet. In 1913, 20 German Marks were worth 1 pound sterling. By December 1918, the exchange rate was 43:1, and by December 1919, it was 185:1. Meanwhile, living expenses had increased eightfold since 1913, leading some observers to predict Germany's impending bankruptcy.

## The London Schedule of Payments and Further Instability

### The Reparations Bill

In April 1921, the Allies presented the London Schedule of Payments, the final war reparations bill for Germany. The total amount was set at 132 billion gold Marks, payable in annual installments of 2 billion plus 26% of the value of German exports. If Germany defaulted, the Allies could extend their occupation and impose additional charges. This announcement caused the Mark's value to crash again, with the exchange rate against the pound reaching 268:1. The crisis led to the collapse of Chancellor Konstantin Fehrenbach's government.

### Hyperinflation in Austria

While Germany faced hyperinflation, Austria experienced an even worse case. Austria-Hungary had adopted a similar money-printing policy during the war, and the disintegration of the empire left the new Austrian Republic economically devastated. Austrian Anna Eisenmenger described the situation in her diary:

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*“Women bought large quantities of sugar, coffee, or other goods, to protect themselves against price increases. Others spent their money willy-nilly, since the next day wine would be more expensive anyway! Prices rose by the hour, and people were possessed by a buying mania...store owners reacted by giving any excuse to close their shops.”*

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## Political and Economic Stabilization

### Stabilization Efforts and the Upper Silesia Plebiscite

In the summer of 1921, the Mark began to stabilize but was still worth far less than in 1918. The postwar political instability and economic dislocation had triggered inflation, which temporarily calmed. One factor contributing to stabilization was the plebiscite in Upper Silesia, a disputed territory between Germany and Poland. According to the peace settlement, a vote was held, and 60% of Upper Silesians voted to stay with Germany. The Poles claimed the Germans had cheated, but the Allies were not legally bound by the vote results.

### Division of Upper Silesia

Differences of opinion emerged among the Allies regarding the border. France favored Poland, while Britain prioritized preserving the region's industry to aid Germany's recovery. The future of Upper Silesia was eventually handed over to the League of Nations. Neutral delegates from Belgium, China, Spain, and Brazil determined the border based on objective data, despite German protests of potential pro-French bias. On October 20, 1921, the League's decision was announced: two-thirds of Upper Silesia remained with Germany, and one-third went to Poland, including most of the industrial sector, coal, and iron ore mines. This decision caused economic dislocation, with workers unable to reach workplaces and suppliers and customers disconnected. Both sides anticipated poverty and unemployment. The German government and political parties expressed outrage, dismissing Allied promises of minority and economic rights protection.

## Taxation and Economic Consequences

### Increased Taxes and Wealth Disparities

The loss of Upper Silesia's economic potential further weakened the Mark. The government increased taxes to combat the growing deficit. Regular citizens faced four main taxes, with income tax being the most significant. High inflation exacerbated the issues, as salaries and wages rose artificially, leading to higher income tax payments despite the devalued currency. The government found it challenging to tax wealthier Germans, who exploited loopholes in the system.

### Wealthy Germans and Tax Evasion

German industrialists and factory owners, who had financially benefited from the war, often evaded taxes. The *Berliner Tageblatt* reported that business taxes brought nearly no income because any expense could be written off, including private cars for owners and directors. Wealthy Germans even speculated against the Mark through foreign currencies, using overseas credit accounts to avoid taxation. British diplomat Joseph Addison remarked on the rampant speculation in September 1921:

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*“There is an enormous increase in speculative activities. According to reports, millions of people in this country are buying foreign currencies and stockpiling foreign bank notes to escape taxation.”*

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## Social Impact and Currency Collapse

### Spending Sprees and Social Unrest

Wealthy Germans often threw extravagant parties to reduce their taxable income, while unemployment rose, and workers grew frustrated. The political left organized demonstrations and strikes, exacerbating the tension between urban workers and rural farmers. The government, fearing left-wing uprisings, continued printing money to maintain peace.

### Loss of Currency Value

For ordinary Germans, a stable currency symbolized trust and stability. The value of money represented the value of work and everyday life expenses. The continuous devaluation of the Mark eroded this trust, damaging the social fabric of an already polarized society. High inflation, capital flight, foreign speculation, and increasing state deficits painted a bleak picture of the German economy in 1921. The government struggled to restore value through taxation, resorting to printing more money.

## Financial Expert Consultations and Future Predictions

### October 1921 Conference

In October 1921, a group of bankers and financial experts from Switzerland, Italy, and Germany convened to address Germany's inflation problem. Their conclusions were dire: Germany would eventually have to declare bankruptcy if the trends continued. The government owed 113 billion Marks by February 1922, but its income was less than 90 billion. Minister Walter Rathenau expressed his frustration:

*“The majority of statesmen and financiers think only in terms of paper. They sit in their offices and stare at the papers that lie before them. And on these papers, there are numbers which in turn represent paper. They write down zeros, although nine zeroes mean a billion. A billion rolls easily off the tongue and is easy to say, but no one can actually imagine a billion.”*

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## Conclusion

As Germany descended further into the inflation crisis in late 1921, Rathenau and millions of other Germans could not foresee that the worst was yet to come. The hyperinflation period of 1921-1923 would become one of the most significant economic crises in history, leaving a profound impact on the Weimar Republic and its citizens.

# Chapter 12 - The Prosperous Yet Precarious Era of the Weimar Republic: 1928

## Key Points

### 1. **Economic Boom:**

- a. Germany's economy experienced significant growth starting in 1924, known as the Golden Twenties.
- b. Political stabilization under Gustav Stresemann and the Dawes Plan facilitated economic recovery and modernization.
- c. Germany saw investments in housing, hospitals, public projects, and social services.

### 2. **Consumer Culture and Mass Entertainment:**

- a. Economic stability led to a consumer culture, with widespread use of consumer credit.
- b. Cinema and radio became popular, and American films were widely enjoyed.
- c. Berlin became a symbol of technological advancement and high living standards.

### 3. **Economic Weaknesses:**

- a. Despite prosperity, Germany's economy had underlying weaknesses, such as dependence on American credit.
- b. Unemployment rose due to assembly line production, and rural areas struggled with high taxes and falling agricultural prices.

### 4. **Political and Social Challenges:**

- a. The Weimar Republic faced a legitimacy crisis, with far-right groups exploiting economic grievances.
- b. Frequent government changes and distrust in the political system undermined stability.
- c. Cultural conservatism grew as a reaction to social liberalism, particularly regarding women's roles.



## Overview

Chapter 12 outlines Germany's economic recovery and cultural flourishing during the Golden Twenties, beginning in 1924. The Dawes Plan and political stabilization under Gustav Stresemann led to significant investments in industrial modernization and public projects. This period saw the rise of consumer culture and mass entertainment, with cinema and radio becoming popular. However, underlying economic weaknesses, such as reliance on American credit and rural struggles, persisted. The Weimar Republic faced political and social challenges, including a legitimacy crisis exploited by far-right groups and growing cultural conservatism. Despite economic growth, these contradictions contributed to the eventual decline of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazi regime.

### *Introduction*

The narrative that the rise of the Nazis was solely due to Germany's financial ruin under the Treaty of Versailles is a simplification. Starting in 1924, Germany experienced an economic upswing known as the *Goldener Zwanziger*, or the Golden Twenties. Despite the lingering economic challenges, Germany entered a period of relative political stability and cultural flourishing by 1928.

## Economic Boom

### Political Stabilization and Economic Policies

In late 1923, Germany began to achieve a semblance of political stability. The passing of an enabling act in the Reichstag granted the government, led by Gustav Stresemann, the authority to pass laws without parliamentary approval. This concentration of power helped the government suppress uprisings like the Beer Hall Putsch and focus on economic reforms.

Government spending was significantly reduced, resulting in civil servants earning 40% to 70% less than before the war. Social services were also cut, a necessary measure to stabilize the economy. The Dawes Plan, finalized in the summer of 1924, restructured Germany's reparations payments without reducing the overall amount. It introduced a new payment schedule, removed the threat of sanctions, and phased out the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr.

## Industrial Modernization and Public Investment

The Dawes Plan included a substantial American loan, which facilitated the modernization of Germany's industrial infrastructure. German businesses adopted American assembly line models, with a particular admiration for Henry Ford's methods. This influx of capital also enabled investment in housing, hospitals, and other public projects, reflecting German modernity. Cities across Germany competed to be the most modern, constructing parks, stadiums, road networks, transport systems, and public libraries. Berlin, as the third-largest city globally, boasted rapid technological advancements and a high standard of living.

Government spending on social services resumed, particularly in unemployment benefits. By 1928, Germany's GDP had increased by 25% since 1925, and total industrial production had surpassed pre-war levels. Germany now had the highest-paid industrial workforce in Europe, with an increasing number of women moving from the countryside to urban areas for employment. The middle class also expanded, with numerous office workers and factory managers.

## Consumer Culture and Mass Entertainment

The economic stability fostered new social and cultural habits. Germans indulged in American-style consumption, fueling further

economic growth. Consumer credit became socially acceptable across all classes, with department stores proliferating. Historian Eric Weitz argued that the hyperinflation experience led Germans to adopt a live-for-today mentality, further encouraged by modern advertising, which blended mass culture with high art.

Cinema and radio emerged as popular forms of entertainment. By 1928, Germany sold 353 million cinema tickets, with American films like Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* and Fred Niblo's *Ben-Hur* being favorites. Radio broadcasting, which began in 1923, saw its audience grow from 10,000 in 1924 to 3.7 million by 1928. Boxing also became a popular spectator sport, enjoyed across social classes.

## Economic Weaknesses

### Underlying Economic Issues

Despite the apparent prosperity, Germany's economy had significant underlying weaknesses. Historian Theo Balderston described this era as "gold-plated," with surface-level wealth concealing deeper problems. The economy stagnated without real technological innovations, and Germany became dangerously dependent on American credit. This reliance created a cycle of international loans, making Germany vulnerable to any downturn in the American economy.

### Unemployment and Agricultural Struggles

The introduction of assembly lines led to a significant rise in unemployment. Housing shortages persisted despite local government efforts. Rural areas, especially farmers, saw little benefit from the economic boom. Farmers, who had managed to pay off debts during hyperinflation, now faced tax burdens 3.7 times higher than before the war. The global over-expansion of agricultural capacity led to falling prices, and German farmers struggled to compete with countries like the United States.

The Mittelstand, or middle class of shopkeepers and artisans, faced high taxes and complex bureaucracy, with their prices undercut by larger department stores. The "golden years" primarily benefited urban communities and big businesses, while rural areas suffered.

## Political and Social Challenges

### Legitimacy Crisis and Far-Right Exploitation

The economic problems exacerbated the Weimar Republic's legitimacy crisis. Far-right groups exploited the grievances of non-urban communities, portraying Weimar as degenerate. Julius Streicher, a prominent Nazi official, denounced the republic for impoverishing the peasantry and selling German land to "international Jewish controlling power." Far-right demonstrations gained traction, with speakers decrying the Weimar democracy.

### Distrust in the Political System

The middle class, having been hardest hit by hyperinflation, grew distrustful of the political system. Workers faced job insecurity and lost rights, such as the eight-hour workday, cut to appease businesses. The newspaper industry did little to bolster faith in the republic, with pro-republican papers either adopting a neutral stance or being drowned out by extreme voices from the far left and far right. Frequent changes in government, with six different cabinets between December 1923 and June 1928, suggested instability in parliamentary democracy. The election of Paul von Hindenburg, who lacked democratic values, as president in 1925, further indicated a lack of commitment to Weimar ideals.

### Cultural Conservatism and Gender Issues

Growing cultural conservatism, partly a reaction to increasing social liberalism, threatened the republic. Women's newfound

freedom and adoption of American fashions and contraception led conservatives to decry the loss of traditional German morality. The era's contradictions—economic modernization versus stagnation, political stability versus legitimacy crisis, cultural change versus conservatism—defined the "golden years" of Weimar Germany.

## Conclusion

The era of the Weimar Republic from 1924 to 1928, known as the Golden Twenties, was marked by both remarkable achievements and profound weaknesses. While Germany experienced economic growth, political stabilization, and cultural flourishing, it was also plagued by underlying economic vulnerabilities, political instability, and social tensions. These contradictions ultimately contributed to the decline of the Weimar Republic and set the stage for the rise of the Nazi regime.

# Chapter 13 - The Decline of the Weimar Republic

## Key Points

1. **Political Instability:**
  - a. The fragmented political landscape and proportional representation system led to frequent changes in government and coalition instability.
  - b. The use of Article 48 by President Hindenburg weakened democratic institutions and paved the way for authoritarian rule.
2. **Economic Crises:**
  - a. Hyperinflation in the early 1920s devastated the economy and eroded public trust in the government.
  - b. The Great Depression in 1929 caused mass unemployment and fueled political extremism.
3. **Social Unrest and Extremism:**
  - a. Economic crises provided fertile ground for extremist movements, with the Nazis and Communists gaining significant support.
  - b. Political violence between paramilitary groups contributed to a climate of fear and instability.
4. **Weaknesses in the Weimar Constitution:**
  - a. Proportional representation led to a fragmented parliament and weak, short-lived administrations.
  - b. Presidential powers, particularly Article 48, were used to undermine parliamentary democracy.
5. **External Pressures:**
  - a. The Treaty of Versailles imposed harsh penalties on Germany, contributing to national humiliation and resentment.
  - b. Economic dependence on foreign loans made the Weimar economy fragile and susceptible to external shocks.

## Overview

Chapter 13 outlines the multifaceted reasons behind the downfall of the Weimar Republic. Political instability, driven by a fragmented political landscape and frequent changes in government, weakened democratic institutions. The use of Article 48 by President Hindenburg to rule by decree further eroded public confidence in the democratic process. Economic crises, including hyperinflation and the Great Depression, devastated the economy and fueled political extremism, with the Nazis and Communists gaining significant support. Social unrest and political violence added to the climate of fear and instability. Weaknesses in the Weimar Constitution, such as proportional representation and extensive presidential powers, made it difficult to form stable governments. External pressures, particularly the harsh penalties of the Treaty of Versailles and economic dependence on foreign loans, further exacerbated Germany's challenges. These combined factors ultimately led to the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazi dictatorship.

## Political Instability

### *Fragmented Political Landscape*

One of the primary reasons for the decline of the Weimar Republic was the fragmented political landscape. The Weimar constitution, while progressive in many respects, created a proportional representation system that led to a highly fragmented Reichstag (parliament). This fragmentation made it difficult for any one party to secure a majority, resulting in frequent changes in government and coalition instability. Between 1919 and 1933, the Weimar Republic saw 20 different cabinets, each struggling to maintain stability and implement coherent policies.

### *Weakness of Democratic Institutions*

The frequent use of Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, which allowed the President to rule by decree in times of emergency, undermined democratic institutions. President Paul von Hindenburg increasingly relied on this article to bypass the Reichstag, weakening the parliamentary system. The reliance on presidential decrees eroded public confidence in the democratic process and paved the way for authoritarian rule.

## Economic Crises

### *Hyperinflation*

The economic turmoil of the early 1920s significantly weakened the Weimar Republic. Hyperinflation in 1923 devastated the German economy, wiping out the savings of the middle class and leading to widespread social unrest. The government's decision to print money to pay war reparations and meet domestic needs caused the value of the German Mark to plummet, leading to economic chaos and loss of public trust in the government.

### *The Great Depression*

The global economic downturn following the 1929 Wall Street Crash had a catastrophic impact on Germany. The Great Depression led to mass unemployment, with six million Germans out of work by 1932. The economic hardship fueled political extremism, as desperate citizens turned to radical parties like the Nazis and the Communists, who promised solutions to their suffering.

## Social Unrest and Extremism

### *Rise of Extremist Movements*

The economic crises of the Weimar era provided fertile ground for extremist movements. Both the Communist Party (KPD) and the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) gained



significant support. The Nazis, led by Adolf Hitler, capitalized on economic distress, political instability, and nationalist sentiment to build a broad coalition of supporters. They used propaganda, mass rallies, and promises of national rejuvenation to attract voters from various social strata.

### *Political Violence*

Political violence was a pervasive feature of the Weimar Republic. The paramilitary wings of the Nazis (SA) and Communists (Red Front Fighters' League) frequently clashed in the streets, contributing to a climate of fear and instability. The government's inability to control these paramilitary groups and restore order further undermined its legitimacy.

## **Weaknesses in the Weimar Constitution**

### *Proportional Representation*

The Weimar Republic's system of proportional representation led to a fragmented parliament with numerous parties, making it difficult to form stable governments. The constant need for coalition building resulted in weak and short-lived administrations, which were often unable to address the pressing issues facing the nation.

### *Presidential Powers*

The constitution granted significant powers to the President, including the ability to appoint chancellors, dissolve the Reichstag, and rule by decree under Article 48. These powers were intended to provide stability in times of crisis but were ultimately used to undermine parliamentary democracy. President Hindenburg's use of these powers to appoint Hitler as Chancellor in January 1933 was a decisive moment in the collapse of the Weimar Republic.

## External Pressures

### *Treaty of Versailles*

The Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, imposed harsh penalties on Germany, including significant territorial losses, military restrictions, and reparations payments. The treaty was deeply unpopular in Germany and was viewed as a national humiliation. The “stab-in-the-back” myth, which falsely claimed that Germany had been betrayed by internal enemies, gained traction and further eroded support for the Weimar Republic.

### *Foreign Relations and Economic Dependence*

The Weimar Republic’s economic recovery in the mid-1920s, driven by the Dawes Plan and American loans, was heavily dependent on foreign capital. The global economic crisis of the late 1920s exposed this vulnerability, as the withdrawal of American loans and investments led to economic collapse in Germany. The reliance on foreign support made the Weimar economy fragile and susceptible to external shocks.

## Conclusion

The decline of the Weimar Republic was the result of a combination of political, economic, and social factors. Political instability, economic crises, social unrest, constitutional weaknesses, and external pressures all contributed to the erosion of democratic institutions and the rise of extremist movements. The failure of the Weimar Republic to address these challenges ultimately led to its downfall and the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship. Understanding these factors is crucial for comprehending the complex dynamics that led to one of the darkest periods in modern history.

# Chapter 14 - Loss of Morality during the Weimar Republic

## Key Points

1. **Proliferation of Drugs:**
  - a. Economic hardship and high unemployment led to widespread drug use, especially cocaine and heroin, in Berlin's nightlife.
  - b. The pharmaceutical industry thrived, introducing drugs like Pervitin, which were initially legal and widely used.
2. **Rise of Prostitution:**
  - a. Economic desperation and urban migration resulted in rampant prostitution, including child prostitution.
  - b. The government legalized prostitution and implemented health checks for sex workers.
3. **Decadent Nightlife:**
  - a. Berlin's nightlife was characterized by extravagant entertainment, drugs, and prostitution, facilitated by organized crime.
  - b. Cross-dressing and sexual deviancy became mainstream, reflecting the era's cultural experimentation.
4. **Economic Collapse and Nazi Intervention:**
  - a. The Great Depression exacerbated economic woes, leading to increased poverty and crime.
  - b. The Nazi regime's rise in 1933 marked a crackdown on vice and crime, aiming to restore traditional morality.

## Overview

Chapter 14 explores the cultural and social changes in Germany following World War I, marked by economic hardship and moral decline. Berlin's nightlife became infamous for drug use, prostitution, and organized crime, with drugs like cocaine and heroin readily available and legal. Economic desperation forced many into prostitution, including children, while cross-dressing

and sexual deviancy gained acceptance in mainstream culture. The Great Depression further deepened economic woes, leading to increased poverty and crime. The rise of the Nazi regime in 1933 brought a crackdown on these vices, as the Nazis aimed to restore traditional German morality and stability. This period remains a complex chapter in German history, reflecting both cultural experimentation and significant social challenges.

### *Introduction*

The Weimar Republic, established after the November 1918 revolution, is often remembered for its vibrant and decadent culture, particularly in Berlin. During this era, the city became notorious for its nightlife and widespread drug use. Economic hardship, high unemployment, and the aftermath of World War I contributed to the proliferation of vices which plunged much of Berlin and Germany into an immorality which greatly disturbed the many Germans with traditional values. While liberals praised these behaviors and practices as a type of social advancement for throwing off traditional morals which liberals felt were constraints on their behavior, traditional Germans saw their society and culture being ruined. When Hitler spoke out against the deviancy in the Weimar culture, Hitler presented himself to Germany as someone who can save the German people. German society and German culture could be saved from destruction by a return to German traditions and German morality. The vices suffered by Germany were due to post-war despair, much of the despair being understood as a result of the unfair peace conditions from the Versailles Treaty.

## **The Proliferation of Drugs**

### **Economic Hardships and Drug Availability**

Berlin's nightlife in the Weimar Republic was significantly fueled by drugs. Amidst record unemployment, with one in three

Germans out of work, many turned to substances to escape their harsh realities. Cocaine was the most popular stimulant, with heroin and tranquilizers also widely used. The Treaty of Versailles exacerbated Germany's economic woes, leading to a severe shortage of commodities like tea and tobacco. As a result, other stimulants became readily available.

During the 1920s, almost all drugs, including cocaine and heroin, were legal and easily accessible. Berlin became the primary consumer of Peruvian cocaine, with 80% of domestically produced cocaine consumed within the city. Nightclubs and cabarets were notorious for providing patrons with drugs upon entry.

## Pharmaceutical Developments

The pharmaceutical industry was one of the few sectors not entirely devastated by the post-war economy. In 1938, the German Temmler pharmaceutical company introduced Pervitin, a methamphetamine marketed as a performance enhancer. Initially available without a prescription, Pervitin became popular across all social strata, from housewives to soldiers. The drug increased alertness, reduced fatigue, and heightened confidence, making it especially appealing to the military. However, its side effects included reduced empathy, increased risk-taking, and diminished sensitivity to pain.

## The Rise of Prostitution

### Economic Desperation and Urban Migration

The economic collapse following World War I left many Germans destitute. The Greater Berlin Act of 1920 expanded the city's size, attracting people from rural areas seeking employment. However, the lack of housing and job opportunities forced many, particularly women, into prostitution.

Prostitution in Berlin became widespread, with women selling their bodies for basic necessities like food and rent. Homosexual and heterosexual prostitution thrived, with streets like Erichstrasse becoming notorious for female prostitution. The German government legalized prostitution and established regional agencies to oversee health checks for sex workers.

## The Proliferation of Child Prostitution

Child prostitution also became rampant. Pharmacies and pimps facilitated this illicit trade, using coded language to offer young prostitutes to clients. Advertisements in newspapers and magazines allowed clients to order young girls like takeout food, further highlighting the moral degradation of the era.

## The Decadent Nightlife

### The Dance Halls and Cabarets

Berlin's nightlife was infamous for its decadence. Venues like the Kit Kat Club and Moka Efti became symbols of the city's hedonistic culture. These establishments offered extravagant entertainment, often featuring drugs and prostitution. Moka Efti, for instance, boasted amenities like a barbershop and typist services, catering to the diverse needs of its patrons.

## Organized Crime and Corruption

Organized crime flourished in Berlin during the Weimar Republic. Criminal gangs, known as Ringvereine, controlled drugs, prostitution, and illegal pornography. These gangs often included war veterans, petty criminals, and corrupt policemen, allowing them to operate with relative impunity. The public perception of these gangs as Robin Hood-like figures further complicated efforts to combat their influence.

## Sexual Deviancy and Cross-Dressing

### Cross-Dressing and Sexual Deviants

The Weimar era saw a significant rise in cross-dressing and acceptance of sexually deviant individuals. Cross-dressing became a popular trend, with establishments catering specifically to this community. Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science played a pivotal role in advancing the understanding and acceptance of cross-dressing and other aspects of human sexuality. The institute issued "transvestite passes" to protect cross-dressers from police harassment.

### Cultural Impact

Cross-dressing and sexually deviant culture became mainstream in Berlin's nightlife. Performers like Anita Berber pushed boundaries with their androgynous and provocative performances. Despite her early death at 29, Berber remained an icon of the Weimar era, symbolizing the period's experimental break from traditional values.

## Decline and Nazi Intervention

### The Economic Collapse

The Great Depression of 1929 further exacerbated Germany's economic woes, leading to hyperinflation and increased poverty. Many people, including mother-daughter teams, turned to prostitution to survive. The economic collapse also intensified the influence of criminal gangs and the proliferation of illicit activities.

### Nazi Crackdown

The rise of the Nazi party in 1933 marked the end of Berlin's decadent era. The new regime, led by Hermann Göring, launched a crackdown on vice and crime. Brothels were shut down, newspapers were monitored for coded messages, and public

indecent laws were strictly enforced. The Institute for Sexual Science was raided, and its records destroyed. Unemployed youths were rehomed and encouraged to join Nazi youth groups, while the economy was redirected towards industrial production, significantly reducing unemployment by 1938.

The Weimar Republic's era of decadence and vice ended abruptly with the rise of the Nazi regime, which sought to restore order through strict moral and social control. The period remains a complex chapter in German history, marked by both cultural experimentation and significant social challenges.

## The Rise of Pervitin

### Development and Introduction

In the late 1930s, amidst Germany's continuing economic struggles, the Temmler pharmaceutical company introduced a new drug called Pervitin. This methamphetamine-based stimulant was marketed as a wonder drug for its ability to enhance performance and combat fatigue. Initially, Pervitin was available without a prescription, making it easily accessible to the general public.

### Pervitin in Civilian Life

Pervitin quickly gained popularity across various sectors of society. Housewives, professionals, students, and laborers all began using the drug to increase their productivity and energy levels. The marketing of Pervitin emphasized its ability to provide a burst of energy, improve concentration, and reduce the need for sleep, which was particularly appealing in a society still grappling with the economic aftershocks of the Great Depression.

Reports from the period highlighted the widespread use of Pervitin in everyday life. It was praised for enabling workers to perform long hours without rest and for helping housewives manage their daily chores with newfound vigor. The drug's



euphoric effects also contributed to its popularity, as it provided a temporary escape from the hardships of daily life in a recovering economy.

## Military Adoption

The utility of Pervitin was not lost on the military. The German armed forces soon recognized the potential benefits of the drug for soldiers, especially in enhancing alertness and reducing fatigue during extended operations. Otto Ranke, a military doctor and director of the Institute for General and Defense Physiology, conducted extensive tests on Pervitin. Despite noting some side effects, Ranke concluded that Pervitin was “an excellent substance for rousing a weary squad... a militarily valuable substance.”

Pervitin was subsequently integrated into the military's standard supplies. It became known for its ability to keep soldiers awake and alert during long missions, providing them with a heightened sense of invincibility and reducing the need for rest. This newfound endurance was particularly beneficial in the context of blitzkrieg tactics, where speed and sustained effort were crucial. Pervitin's use in the military was widespread, and it was credited with significantly enhancing the performance of German soldiers during the early years of World War II.

## Social and Psychological Impacts

While Pervitin was initially hailed for its positive effects on productivity and alertness, the drug also had significant social and psychological impacts. The widespread use of Pervitin contributed to a culture of overwork and relentless productivity, where individuals were pushed to their physical and mental limits.

Psychologically, Pervitin use led to increased risk-taking behaviors and a sense of invincibility, which could result in

dangerous situations both in civilian life and on the battlefield. The drug's effects on empathy and emotional sensitivity also had social repercussions, as users became more isolated and less connected to those around them.

The addictive nature of Pervitin also became apparent over time. Regular use led to dependency, with users requiring higher doses to achieve the same effects. Withdrawal symptoms included severe fatigue, depression, and irritability, which compounded the social and economic challenges already faced by many Germans during this period.

## Government and Medical Response

As the negative effects of Pervitin became more apparent, the medical community and government began to take action. By the early 1940s, the addictive properties and adverse health effects of Pervitin were well-documented. Medical professionals called for stricter controls on its distribution and use.

The government responded by imposing regulations on the sale and distribution of Pervitin. Prescriptions became mandatory, and public health campaigns were launched to educate the population about the dangers of methamphetamine use. These efforts aimed to curb the widespread abuse of the drug and mitigate its harmful effects on society.

## Conclusion

The rise of Pervitin during the Weimar Republic and early Nazi era illustrates the complex interplay between economic hardship, societal pressures, and the allure of chemical solutions to human problems. While initially seen as a panacea for the ills of society, Pervitin's legacy is a cautionary tale of the dangers of widespread drug use and the unforeseen consequences of seeking quick fixes to deep-seated issues. The history of Pervitin underscores the importance of a balanced approach to drug regulation and the need for awareness of the potential long-term impacts of substance use.

# Chapter 15 - Emergence of Nazi Germany

## Key Points

### 1. Impact of the Treaty of Versailles:

- a. The Treaty imposed severe conditions, including territorial losses, military restrictions, and financial reparations, fueling resentment and economic hardship in Germany.

### 2. Economic and Social Strain:

- a. The economic turmoil, hyperinflation, and the Great Depression led to widespread poverty and unemployment, creating fertile ground for radical ideologies.

### 3. Political Instability:

- a. The Weimar Republic faced frequent government changes, opposition from the far left and right, and political violence, leading to a desire for strong, authoritarian leadership.

### 4. Rise of Radical Ideologies:

- a. The NSDAP, led by Hitler, capitalized on discontent, using propaganda and promises of national rejuvenation to gain support.

### 5. Hitler's Ascendancy:

- a. Hitler's charismatic leadership, the failures of the Weimar Republic, and the effective use of propaganda enabled the Nazi Party to gain traction, culminating in Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in 1933.

## Overview

Chapter 15 examines the conditions that led to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime. The Treaty of Versailles imposed harsh penalties on Germany, causing economic and social strain that fueled widespread resentment. The economic turmoil, including hyperinflation and the Great Depression, created fertile ground for radical ideologies. The political instability of the Weimar Republic, marked by frequent changes in government and

political violence, led to a desire for strong leadership. The NSDAP, led by Hitler, capitalized on this discontent with effective propaganda and promises to restore Germany's former glory. Hitler's charismatic leadership and the failures of the Weimar Republic allowed the Nazi Party to gain significant support, culminating in Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in 1933. The chapter outlines the convergence of these factors, leading to the establishment of Nazi Germany.

## Conditions That Gave Rise to Hitler's Germany

### The Rise of Authoritarianism in Germany

The conditions that led to the emergence of Adolf Hitler and the eventual authoritarian takeover of Germany can be traced back to the aftermath of World War I. The defeat of the German Army, despite still being on French soil, left many German soldiers and nationalists deeply disillusioned with the war's conclusion. Nationalists and veterans accused the *November criminals*, the politicians who signed the armistice, of betraying the nation. The punitive *diktat*, as they referred to the **Treaty of Versailles**, further fueled animosities against the new government and the treaty itself.

### Impact of the Treaty of Versailles

The **Treaty of Versailles** imposed severe conditions on Germany, exacerbating widespread resentment. Germany was compelled to cede territory, resulting in the loss of four million German citizens to neighboring countries. Additionally, Germany was stripped of its colonial empire and subjected to severe military restrictions. The **war guilt clause** forced Germany to accept full responsibility for the war, leading to national humiliation. Furthermore, Germany was obligated to pay substantial financial

reparations to the victors, placing a heavy burden on an already struggling economy.

## Economic and Social Strain

The economic impact of the **Treaty of Versailles** intensified Germany's post-war difficulties. The financial reparations demanded by the treaty strained the German economy, leading to hyperinflation and widespread economic instability. The loss of territory and resources further weakened Germany's economic position. These social and economic hardships contributed to a growing sense of resentment and discontent among the German population, creating fertile ground for radical political movements.

## Political Instability

Post-war Germany's political landscape was marked by instability and turmoil. The Weimar Republic, established after the fall of the monarchy, struggled to maintain stability and garner support. The new democratic government faced opposition from both the far left and the far right, with numerous uprisings and political assassinations destabilizing the nation. The perceived weakness of the Weimar Republic further disillusioned many Germans, leading to a growing desire for strong, authoritarian leadership.

## Rise of Radical Ideologies

The conditions in post-war Germany created an environment in which radical ideologies could thrive. The National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), led by Adolf Hitler, capitalized on the widespread discontent and nationalist sentiment. The party's rhetoric, which blamed the *November criminals* and the **Treaty of Versailles** for Germany's woes, resonated with many Germans. The NSDAP's promises to restore Germany's former

glory and address the grievances of the population attracted significant support.

## Hitler's Ascendancy

Adolf Hitler's rise to power was facilitated by the socio-economic and political conditions of post-war Germany. The NSDAP's effective use of propaganda, combined with Hitler's charismatic leadership, enabled the party to gain traction. The failures of the Weimar Republic, along with the economic hardships and national humiliation imposed by the **Treaty of Versailles**, created a longing for strong leadership. Hitler's promises to revoke the treaty, rebuild the military, and restore national pride appealed to a populace desperate for change.

The convergence of these factors—disillusionment with the war's outcome, the harsh conditions of the **Treaty of Versailles**, economic turmoil, political instability, and the rise of radical ideologies—culminated in the eventual takeover of Germany by Adolf Hitler and the establishment of Nazi Germany.

## Economic Factors

Several economic factors contributed to the dire conditions that led to the rise of authoritarianism in Germany. The obligation to pay war debts and reparations triggered an inflation crisis that worsened significantly in 1923 following the Ruhr crisis. When Germany defaulted on reparations payments, the Ruhr region of West Germany was invaded and occupied by France and Belgium. During this crisis, the German government continued printing German marks to pay the workers who were on strike, exacerbating the inflation problem to the point of hyperinflation.

The economic situation deteriorated further in the late 1920s with the onset of the Great Depression. The United States withdrew its loans to Germany, leading to soaring unemployment rates, which reached as high as 30% by 1932. This economic

hardship was compounded by the protectionist policies of the Weimar Republic.

## Weakness of the Weimar Political System

The Weimar Republic, which governed Germany after World War One, played a significant role in creating conditions that led to the rise of Nazi Germany. The *Weimar Constitution* stipulated that a president be elected every seven years, and during times of national emergency, the president had the authority to rule by decree. The chancellor of Germany, who served as the head of government, was appointed by the president, thereby granting the president considerable political power. The Reichstag, Germany's legislative body, allocated seats through proportional representation. Essentially, seats were distributed to various parties based on the percentage of votes they received in national elections. This system made it challenging for any single party to dominate the government, resulting in numerous unstable coalition governments and frequent rule by presidential decree.

## Political Violence

Political violence was a prominent feature in Germany during the 1910s and 1920s. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 inspired communist movements across Europe, including Germany, where this movement was known as the Spartacus League. In reaction to these communist movements, right-wing nationalist ex-soldiers established paramilitary organizations in Germany, such as the *Freikorps*, to counter the growing influence of communist parties. The Nazi Party itself orchestrated a violent attempt to overthrow the government in November 1923, known as the **Beer Hall Putsch**.



## Methods Used to Establish the Nazi Regime

Adolf Hitler must be central to any discussion regarding the rise of authoritarianism in Germany. Hitler's political involvement intensified following Germany's defeat in World War One. Deeply anti-Semitic, he held the belief that communists and Jewish individuals in Germany were collaborating to undermine German culture and society. He initially joined the German Workers' Party, which later became known as the National Socialist German Workers' Party (*NSDAP*), and he played a significant role in crafting the Nazi Party platform.

## The Nazi Party Platform

The Nazi Party platform encompassed ideas of nationalism and socialism. It was racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-democratic. The program advocated for the unification of all German people, referred to as *Großdeutschland*, asserting that all ethnic Germans in Europe should belong to one country. This vision included Austria and territories lost by Germany under the Treaty of Versailles. The platform also called for the overturning of the **Treaty of Versailles** and the acquisition of new territories through the *Lebensraum* program to accommodate Germany's growing population. Additionally, it proposed citizenship for all ethnic Germans while denying it to Jewish people.

## Use of Force

The Nazi Party employed force extensively in its bid for power. The Brownshirts, or *Sturmabteilung* (SA), the Nazi Party's paramilitary wing, engaged in violent actions against opponents such as communists and Jews, thereby facilitating party membership and growth. In 1923, Adolf Hitler and Erich Ludendorff, key leaders of the Nazi Party, mobilized their SA to attempt a violent overthrow

of the government in Munich, Germany. This event, known as the Beer Hall Putsch, was swiftly suppressed by the Bavarian police. Although Hitler was arrested, he ultimately received a lenient sentence. Consequently, the Nazi Party moderated its violent tactics in the aftermath of the Putsch.

## Ideology

Hitler's imprisonment led to the creation of his book *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*), which articulated his ideology and objectives. This ideology focused on the stark division between Germans and Jews, as well as between nationalists in Germany and communists. He posited that Germany's destiny was to become an Aryan nation—a northern European Caucasian state—dedicated to the destruction of international Jewry. Additionally, his ideology was vehemently anti-communist.

## Persuasion and Coercion

Hitler's propaganda, orchestrated by Joseph Goebbels in the 1920s, portrayed Adolf Hitler as a decisive German leader necessary to restore Germany to its former power. The strategic use of media, including film and radio, along with traditional posters and newspaper columns, proved effective. Modern transportation, such as railroads and airplanes, enabled swift travel between German cities for political rallies, further bolstering Hitler's image. Goebbels' success in this realm led to his appointment as the Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany.

In the 1930s, the onset of the Great Depression resulted in an increase in the Nazi party's share of votes in proportional elections. However, no party managed to secure a majority, necessitating the formation of weak coalition governments. Consequently, President Hindenburg often ruled by decree. As the leader of the largest party in Germany, Adolf Hitler aspired to the position of Chancellor. Although Hindenburg offered him the

vice-chancellorship under German Chancellor Franz von Papen, Hitler declined, insisting on the chancellor position. In the 1932 presidential election, Hitler ran against Hindenburg and, despite losing, garnered significant support, demonstrating the Nazi party's wide appeal among the populace.

Ultimately, in January 1933, Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor of Germany. It was hoped that the Nazis were too weak to challenge the traditional rule of Weimar Germany, but this appointment aimed to secure the backing of anti-communists and right-wing elite Germans. Hitler's transition from Chancellor to President would be the subject of subsequent discussions.

# Chapter 16 - Establishment of Nazi Germany

## Key Points

1. **Reichstag Fire:**
  - a. The Reichstag fire in February 1933 was exploited by the Nazis to fuel anti-communist sentiment, leading to their electoral victory in March.
2. **March 1933 Reichstag Elections:**
  - a. The Nazis secured 44% of the vote and formed a coalition to pass the Enabling Act, allowing Hitler to rule by decree.
3. **Enabling Act:**
  - a. The Enabling Act granted Hitler authority to govern without Reichstag consultation, effectively removing constitutional constraints on his power.
4. **Gleichschaltung:**
  - a. The Nazification of Germany involved banning all political parties except the Nazi Party and bringing all state parliaments and the legal system under Nazi control.
5. **Night of the Long Knives:**
  - a. In June 1934, Hitler purged the SA leadership and other potential rivals, consolidating his control with the support of the Wehrmacht.
6. **Rise of the SS:**
  - a. The SS, initially Hitler's bodyguards, became a powerful organization under Heinrich Himmler, managing concentration camps and acting as a secret police force.

## Overview

Chapter 16 outlines Adolf Hitler's rapid consolidation of power from Chancellor to Führer. The Reichstag fire in February 1933 allowed the Nazis to exploit anti-communist sentiment, leading to an electoral victory in March. With the passage of the Enabling Act, Hitler gained the authority to govern by decree, removing any

constitutional limitations. The process of Gleichschaltung began in 1934, resulting in the Nazification of all aspects of German life and the elimination of political opposition. The Night of the Long Knives in June 1934 saw Hitler purge the SA leadership and other rivals, securing the Wehrmacht's support. The SS, under Heinrich Himmler, became a powerful force managing concentration camps and acting as the secret police, further solidifying Nazi control over Germany.

## From Chancellor to *Der Führer*

We will examine the consolidation of power under Adolf Hitler in Germany. Expectations that Hitler could be managed as Chancellor were quickly proven wrong. Within eighteen months of his appointment to this role, he had seized complete control of the German state. Three critical events facilitated Hitler's rapid transition from Chancellor to *Der Führer*, the leader of Germany: the Reichstag fire, the March 1933 Reichstag elections, and the passage of the **Enabling Act**.

### The Reichstag Fire

The Reichstag was the name of both the German Parliament and the building that housed it in Berlin. In February 1933, a Dutch communist named Marinus van der Lubbe committed an act of arson by burning the Reichstag to the ground. This was an isolated attack and not part of a larger communist conspiracy to overthrow Germany. However, the Nazi Party, led by Joseph Goebbels' propaganda machine, exploited the Reichstag fire to fuel anti-communist sentiment. With Reichstag elections scheduled for the following month, in March, this propaganda blitz, coupled with the SA's targeting and arresting of German Communist Party members suspected of being involved in the

Reichstag fire, ultimately led to an electoral victory for the Nazi Party.

## The March 1933 Reichstag Elections

In the March 1933 elections, the Nazi propaganda machinery targeted left-wing parties, notably the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. This intense campaign enabled the Nazis to secure 44% of the Reichstag vote, making them the largest party in Germany. However, they still fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass legislation independently. Adolf Hitler thus had to collaborate with centrist parties, such as the Catholic Center Party and the National People's Party, to achieve the necessary majority. The first significant law passed with this coalition's support was the **Enabling Act**.

## Passing of the Enabling Act

The **Enabling Act** granted the German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, the authority to govern by personal decree without requiring consultation with the Reichstag. This act effectively removed any constitutional limitations on Hitler's power, although the Weimar Constitution technically remained in existence. The passage of the Enabling Act within the framework of the Constitution meant that there were no longer any legal constraints on Hitler's rule.

## Gleichschaltung

In 1934, the process known as *Gleichschaltung* commenced, marking the Nazification of Germany. This comprehensive organization and coordination under Nazi rule led to the prohibition of all political parties except for the National Socialist Party. All state parliaments, such as those in Bavaria, were brought under Nazi control. The legal system was entirely dominated by the party. Jews were systematically removed from public offices across Germany. Furthermore, the Nazi Party

sought to dominate all facets of German life, encompassing everything from labor to leisure activities.

## Night of the Long Knives

As the state underwent Nazification, Adolf Hitler sought to ensure the Nazi Party's complete unity under his leadership. This objective culminated in the events of June 1934, known as the *Night of the Long Knives*. During this period, the Nazi Party carried out a purge to eliminate any internal challengers and opposition to Hitler's rule. The purge primarily targeted Ernst Röhm, the leader of the SA (Sturmabteilung or Brownshirts), who were initially the early Nazi Party's paramilitary force. Hitler accused Röhm of orchestrating a putsch, or uprising, against his leadership. Consequently, Röhm was arrested and executed. Additionally, thousands of other Nazi Party members perceived as threats were purged.

The German military, the Wehrmacht, supported Hitler's actions against the SA, viewing the SA as rivals. In the aftermath, the SS (*Schutzstaffel* or protective squads) rose in prominence, replacing the SA as the primary paramilitary organization in Hitler's Germany.

## Hitler's SS

The SS (*Schutzstaffel*) originated as Adolf Hitler's personal bodyguards in the 1920s. Under Hitler's regime, it evolved into a powerful civilian police force that functioned similarly to a military organization, operating outside typical legal channels and not constrained by court trials. Led by Heinrich Himmler and accountable solely to Hitler, the SS orchestrated and managed the concentration camps in Germany. The first of these camps, Dachau, was established in southern Germany in 1933, initially housing political opponents and individuals arrested during the *Night of the Long Knives*.

## SS Organization

SS organization featured many facets. The Death's Head division was established to manage and guard the camps, and obviously that is going to grow as Nazi Germany grows. The Gestapo was meant to remove the enemies of the German state. This became the German secret police, akin to the Soviet NKVD. The Waffen-SS, or the special military units of the SS, will be heard about as the Second World War begins.

## SS Organization

The SS (*Schutzstaffel*) was structured into several specialized divisions. The **Death's Head Division** was specifically formed to oversee and guard the concentration camps, a role that expanded as Nazi Germany's territory grew. The **Gestapo**, or secret state police, was tasked with eliminating enemies of the German state, functioning similarly to the Soviet NKVD. Additionally, the **Waffen-SS** represented the armed military units of the SS, which played a significant role as the Second World War commenced.



# Chapter 17 - Opposition to Hitler's Regime

## Key Points

1. **Night of the Long Knives:**
  - a. In June 1934, Hitler purged opposition within the Nazi Party, particularly targeting the SA and its leader Ernst Röhm, consolidating his power with the support of the SS.
2. **Limited Opposition:**
  - a. After Hitler's rise to power, opposition was minimal and disorganized, with significant resistance occurring mainly during periods of crisis like the onset and later stages of World War II.
3. **Left-Wing Opposition:**
  - a. Communists and socialists faced severe repression, with many imprisoned or executed, limiting their ability to organize effective resistance.
4. **Right-Wing Opposition:**
  - a. Military and aristocratic circles, discontent with Hitler's leadership, attempted several plots, including the failed July 20th bomb plot (Operation Valkyrie) in 1944.
5. **Youth Opposition:**
  - a. Groups like the White Rose, Swing Kids, and Edelweiss Pirates resisted Nazi control through various means, including distributing anti-Nazi propaganda and supporting deserters.
6. **Religious Opposition:**
  - a. Religious opposition was limited, with some individual clergy resisting but no formal opposition from major churches. The Catholic Church's resistance led to the cessation of the T4 euthanasia program.
7. **Failure of Opposition:**
  - a. The opposition failed largely due to Hitler's popularity, severe punishments for dissent, and the regime's effective suppression of resistance efforts.

## Overview

Chapter 17 examines the various forms of resistance against Adolf Hitler's rule in Nazi Germany. Initially, opposition within the Nazi Party itself was targeted during the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, where Hitler purged the SA and other potential rivals. After Hitler consolidated power, opposition was minimal and fragmented, with significant resistance occurring during periods of crisis such as the onset of World War II and its later stages. Left-wing opposition was severely repressed, with many communists and socialists imprisoned or executed. Right-wing opposition came from military and aristocratic circles, culminating in the failed July 20th bomb plot in 1944. Youth groups like the White Rose, Swing Kids, and Edelweiss Pirates resisted through anti-Nazi propaganda and supporting deserters. Religious opposition was limited but included notable figures like Martin Niemöller. Ultimately, the opposition failed due to Hitler's popularity, the regime's harsh punishments for dissent, and effective suppression of resistance efforts, leading to the downfall of the Nazi regime only through military defeat in 1945.

## Night of the Long Knives

The opposition within the Nazi Party was first targeted during the Night of the Long Knives in June 1934. During this event, Adolf Hitler took decisive action against those within his own political party who opposed or challenged his leadership. The purge began with Ernst Röhm, the leader of the SA, who was arrested and ultimately executed. Following this, the SA's power was significantly diminished, and the SS, under Heinrich Himmler, rose to prominence as Hitler's primary secret police force and military apparatus. Over a thousand party members were arrested, and hundreds were killed during this brutal purge.

## Limited Opposition After the Rise of Nazism

There was limited opposition to Nazi rule in Germany following Hitler's rise to power. The **Enabling Act** rendered political opposition virtually impossible, and opposition movements against Hitler lacked substantial organization. The resistance that did exist was concentrated during periods of crisis for the state: 1939, at the onset of World War II, and 1942 to 1945, when the war began to turn against Germany. Minimal opposition occurred during the perceived successes of Hitler's regime from 1934 to 1938 and from 1939 to 1942.

## Left-Wing Opposition

Opposition from the political left was extensively suppressed during the initial phase of the Nazi regime. After the *Reichstag* fire in 1933, thousands of Communist Party members and Socialist Party members were apprehended and confined to concentration camps, such as Dachau in southern Germany. **Labor unions were banned**, and any attempts to organize labor resulted in imprisonment or execution. Consequently, left-wing opposition operated largely underground and remained unorganized throughout the duration of Nazi rule.

In August 1939, the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact led to a temporary reduction in the persecution of communists in Germany. However, this period of reprieve concluded in June 1941, when Germany breached the pact by invading the Soviet Union, resulting in a renewed crackdown on communists.

## Right-Wing Opposition

Opposition from the political right originated from leadership within the military and the traditional German aristocracy, labeled as *Schwartz Kapelle* by the Gestapo. This opposition was not an

organized movement against the Nazi regime, though some individuals devised plans to overthrow Hitler's regime. Most of this dissent emerged from the military, as Hitler, serving as Commander-in-Chief, frequently disregarded the recommendations of his military leaders. After the tide of the war shifted in 1943 and beyond, there were numerous failed assassination attempts on Adolf Hitler.

## Operation Valkyrie

Most notable was Operation Valkyrie, specifically the July 20th bomb plot of 1944. This event was part of a broader coup attempt by certain military officials aiming to seize control of the government from the Nazis following the assassination of Adolf Hitler. Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg placed a bomb in a meeting room where Hitler was present. The bomb detonated; however, Hitler, who was at the table, escaped with minor injuries due to the protection afforded by a massive wooden table leg. Following this failed coup, over 7,000 suspected participants were arrested, with nearly 5,000 subsequently executed.

## Opposition from German Youth

During Adolf Hitler's rule, some opposition emerged from German youth, who suffered from the Nazi Party's restrictions on their social and leisure activities and mandatory membership in organizations like the Hitler Youth. Despite their limited impact on the state, several youth opposition movements arose. The White Rose group, a small collective of students led by Hans and Sophie Scholl from Munich University, created and disseminated anti-Nazi propaganda in Munich. In 1943, the group was exposed, and six members, including Hans and Sophie Scholl, were executed by guillotine.

Another youth opposition group was the *Swingjugend* or Swing Kids, who resisted Nazi conformity through their support of

American jazz music and dance. The Edelweiss Pirates were a loosely organized, nationwide group of German youth who resisted the Hitler Youth and rebelled against Nazi restrictions on their leisure activities and society before being forced to join the military. During the war, some Edelweiss Pirates actively supported army deserters and helped distribute Allied leaflets dropped over Germany. In 1944, the SS cracked down on these groups, leading to the public hanging of many teenagers across Germany.

## Religious Opposition

Religious opposition to Hitler's rule existed but remained relatively limited. While some individual clergy members resisted Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, there was no formal opposition from major churches in Germany during Hitler's regime. The opposition to communism, viewed as godless by many churches, led to a tacit tolerance by the Nazi Party, which allowed these churches to continue operating.

In 1934, Martin Niemöller established the *Confessional Church* in opposition to Nazi influence on the Lutheran Church. His activities led to his imprisonment in a concentration camp. Despite this, the church's support of the regime allowed some degree of influence over Nazi policy. For instance, resistance from the Roman Catholic Church prompted Hitler to abandon the **T4 euthanasia program**, which had resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands, up to 200,000 people in Germany from 1939 to 1941, due to mental and physical disabilities. Although the killings within this euthanasia program continued until the end of the war.

## Why the Opposition in Germany Failed

Opposition in Germany ultimately failed because Hitler remained overwhelmingly popular for most of his rule, particularly until 1942 when the war's tide turned against him. The imposition of severe punishments on those who opposed German or Nazi rule deterred open resistance. Any challenge to Hitler's authority was against **German state law**, resulting in imprisonment or worse. It was only the military defeat of Nazi Germany that led to the downfall of the party and Adolf Hitler in the spring of 1945.

# Chapter 18 - Nazi Germany's Domestic Policies

## Key Points

### 1. **Economic Policies:**

- a. The Nazi regime implemented public works programs and prioritized rearmament to combat unemployment and prepare for war.
- b. Schacht focused on economic recovery, while Göring's Four-Year Plan aimed at making Germany self-sufficient and rapidly expanding its military capabilities.

### 2. **Labor Policies:**

- a. The German Labor Front regulated the workforce, prohibiting unions and strikes, and militarized labor.
- b. Labor shortages during the war led to the conscription of German citizens and reliance on forced labor from occupied territories.

### 3. **Propaganda and Media Control:**

- a. Joseph Goebbels orchestrated extensive propaganda to glorify Hitler and the Nazi Party, using all forms of media.
- b. The press and radio were strictly controlled to disseminate Nazi ideology and prevent dissent.

### 4. **Arts and Education:**

- a. The arts were censored to promote Nazi ideals, and education was directed to instill Nazi beliefs, including Aryan superiority and anti-Semitism.
- b. Jewish teachers and students were removed from educational institutions.

### 5. **Hitler Youth and League of German Maidens:**

- a. These organizations indoctrinated youth with Nazi ideology, preparing boys for military service and girls for domestic roles.

### 6. **Women in Nazi Germany:**

- a. Women were encouraged to focus on motherhood and domesticity, with incentives for having multiple children.

- b. War demands later required women to return to the workforce.

**7. Treatment of Minorities and Persecution of Jews:**

- a. Nazi policies targeted minorities and Jews, leading to forced sterilizations, euthanasia programs, and ultimately, the Holocaust.
- b. The Final Solution led to the systematic extermination of millions of Jews in concentration and death camps.

## Overview

Chapter 18 examines the multifaceted policies of the Nazi regime to consolidate power and prepare for war, including economic recovery through public works and rearmament under Schacht and Göring's aggressive Four-Year Plan. Labor policies militarized the workforce, banning unions and strikes, while propaganda led by Goebbels glorified Hitler and controlled all media. The arts and education promoted Nazi ideology, and youth organizations indoctrinated children. Women were encouraged to focus on motherhood, but war demands required them to work. Racial policies targeted minorities and Jews, leading to forced sterilizations, euthanasia programs, and the Holocaust, reflecting the totalitarian and extremist nature of Nazi Germany.

## Economic Policies

The Nazis ascended to power during the Great Depression, a period that presented Adolf Hitler with a low benchmark for economic improvement in Germany. This context allowed the Nazi regime to gain political capital as the economy recovered in subsequent years. Hitler prioritized industrialization and rapid rearmament to rebuild Germany's military strength. However, his initial Minister of Economics, Hjalmar Schacht, focused on economic recovery without immediately pushing for extensive rearmament.



Schacht, appointed as President of the Reichsbank in 1933 and Minister of Economics in 1934, implemented large public works programs to combat unemployment. These included the construction of the *Autobahn* network and the establishment of the National Labor Service, which mandated young men to serve six months learning essential skills. Schacht favored gradual rearmament to avoid disrupting the civilian economy.

However, this approach led to a conflict with Hitler, resulting in Schacht's replacement by Hermann Göring in 1937. Göring, a close associate of Hitler, advocated for more aggressive industrialization and rearmament. He was appointed to oversee the **Four Year Plan**, which aimed to make Germany self-sufficient (*autarky*) and rapidly expand its military capabilities. This plan included the establishment of new industrial projects, such as refineries and aluminum plants, to support the war effort.

The shift in economic policy under Göring marked a departure from Schacht's more measured approach, prioritizing military needs over civilian economic stability. This aggressive rearmament and industrialization drive played a crucial role in preparing Germany for its expansionist ambitions, despite the long-term economic challenges it posed.

## Autarky and the Four-Year Plan

*Autarky* refers to the development of a self-sufficient economy, rooted in the lessons learned from World War I, where Germany's inability to secure external supplies contributed to its defeat. The concept of *autarky* called for Germany to sustain its economy internally, minimizing reliance on foreign trade to ensure success in future conflicts. For Hermann Göring, this vision was operationalized through the **Four-Year Plan**, which aimed to transform Germany into an economically self-sufficient nation. This plan involved greater control over the labor force and

protectionist economic policies to limit imports and bolster domestic industries.

The **Four-Year Plan** sought to rapidly expand Germany's industrial base, particularly in sectors essential for war, such as synthetic materials and military production. The plan included extensive public works programs and state-directed investments in infrastructure, contributing to a significant rise in employment throughout the 1930s. This economic strategy not only supported the Nazi regime's militaristic ambitions but also reinforced its political strength by reducing unemployment and fostering economic growth.

## Labor Policies

Labor in Nazi Germany was organized under the **German Labor Front** (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront*), which regulated the workforce under a system that effectively militarized labor. Workers were designated as "soldiers of the economy," and traditional unions were prohibited, along with strikes and collective bargaining. The German Labor Front controlled all aspects of employment, including hirings, firings, and wage determinations. Although there were provisions for insurance and the education of workers' children, the movement of workers and their ability to change jobs were strictly limited.

With the outbreak of war in 1939, Albert Speer was appointed **Minister of Armaments and War Production** to ensure efficient coordination between the military and industry. Under his administration, the German economy saw a significant increase in production to meet military demands through 1943. However, by 1944, the intensifying Allied bombing raids on German cities and industrial sites began to hamper production efforts, complicating the manufacture of necessary war materials. In response to labor shortages, a mass conscription program was initiated in 1942, compelling German citizens into

the industrial workforce. Additionally, Nazi Germany increasingly relied on enslaved prisoners and foreign labor from occupied territories to meet its labor needs.

## Propaganda

Propaganda in Nazi Germany was pervasive and meticulously orchestrated by Joseph Goebbels, the **Minister of Propaganda**. He crafted a narrative to consolidate the German nation under Adolf Hitler's and the Nazi Party's control, portraying the German nation as the pinnacle of social and cultural organization. This was achieved through the relentless repetition of key themes across various media, including radio broadcasts, films, and posters. The image of Hitler and the swastika symbol of the Nazi Party were omnipresent, ensuring constant visibility.

Hitler and the party were invariably depicted in a positive light, emphasizing Hitler's infallibility through the *Führerprinzip* (Führer principle), which asserted that Hitler could do no wrong. Central to Nazi propaganda were the elimination of Jewish influence and the promotion of Aryan supremacy. Large-scale political rallies were held to celebrate Nazi achievements and future aspirations, reinforcing the party's message. The success of the **1936 Berlin Olympic Games** was also exploited as a propaganda tool to showcase the supposed superiority of the Nazi regime.

## Media Control

The press in Nazi Germany was strictly regulated by the Nazi Party. All information disseminated to newspapers was funneled through the Nazi-controlled **German Newspaper Bureau**. The **Editor's Law** of 1933 held editors personally responsible for the content published in their papers, leading to extensive self-censorship without direct government intervention. The **Reich Radio Company** was responsible for broadcasting Nazi

propaganda across the airwaves. Although enforcement was challenging, the state imposed a ban on Germans listening to foreign broadcasts to maintain control over the information available to the public.

## Arts and Education

The arts in Nazi Germany were severely constrained under the regime's propaganda efforts. Censorship ensured that only art glorifying Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party was permitted. Abstract art and jazz music, particularly from the United States, were dismissed as degenerate, and Jewish artists and their works were expunged from the public sphere.

Education in Nazi Germany was meticulously directed to propagate the ideals of Nazism. The curriculum emphasized traditional subjects alongside a pro-Nazi interpretation of German history and language, extolling the virtues of the state. It incorporated racist theories that promoted Aryan superiority and anti-Semitism, biological studies endorsing social Darwinist concepts, and the teaching of eugenics. Jewish teachers were systematically removed from schools, and Jewish students were ultimately prohibited from attending educational institutions.

## Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens (BDM)

The Hitler Youth originated in the 1920s as a component of the nascent Nazi Party, intended to cultivate future party members. Initially one among many youth organizations in Germany, it became the sole boys' organization by 1936, under the Nazi regime. Similar to the Boy Scouts but with a distinct focus on national socialism, loyalty to the state, and unwavering allegiance to Adolf Hitler, the Hitler Youth emphasized physical activities, wellness, and outdoor life. It served as a training ground for future

Nazi Party members, soldiers of the German Wehrmacht, and SS members.

For young women, the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM), or League of German Maidens, functioned as the female counterpart to the Hitler Youth. It focused on imparting skills that aligned with the Nazi vision of womanhood and the patriarchal society in Germany. Although participation in these organizations was initially voluntary, it became compulsory by 1939.

## Women in Nazi Germany

Under Adolf Hitler's vision, the role of German women was primarily domestic. The government emphasized the importance of motherhood and incentivized it through various rewards. Women were encouraged to leave the workforce to become mothers, thereby contributing to the growth of the future German population. **Abortion was made illegal**, and financial incentives were provided for marriages and childbirth. Women who bore multiple children were eligible for the **Cross of Honor of the German Mother** if they had four or more offspring. This policy adhered to the traditional German ideals of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, church), although the role of the church was de-emphasized under Nazi rule.

However, the demands of war, especially after 1942, necessitated the return of women to the industrial workforce, deviating from the regime's initial emphasis on a purely domestic lifestyle.

## Treatment of Minorities in Nazi Germany

Nazi Aryanism, the ideology of racial purity central to Nazi beliefs, resulted in the persecution and extermination of individuals deemed non-Aryan. As early as 1933, the **Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring** mandated the forced sterilization of individuals with conditions such as epilepsy,

deafness, and blindness. While these actions were part of a broader eugenics movement, Germany implemented these policies more extensively than any other nation.

By 1939, Adolf Hitler issued an order for **Aktion T4**, a program that called for the euthanasia, or forced killing, of individuals deemed defective. This program led to the deaths of over 70,000 people.

## Persecution of Jews

Jews, constituting merely one percent of the German population, were the primary targets of Nazi propaganda. The persecution of Jews intensified progressively, beginning with open harassment and violence in 1933. Jews were excluded from civil service positions and numerous professional fields. The **Nuremberg Race Laws** of 1935 deprived Jews of legal and civil rights prohibited marriages between Jews and non-Jews and revoked their full citizenship.

The oppression escalated as Jewish doctors were prohibited from practicing, Jewish businesses were forcibly shut down, and Jewish students were expelled from schools and universities. In November 1938, **Kristallnacht**, a nationwide pogrom, resulted in the destruction of synagogues and Jewish shops, the killing of over 100 Jews, and the internment of thousands in concentration camps.

By 1942, amidst the ongoing war, Hitler demanded the extermination of the Jewish race in Europe. The early war years saw the deportation and systematic murder of Jews by special SS units, which followed the Wehrmacht into occupied territories, organizing and executing hundreds of thousands of Eastern European Jews.

The **Wannsee Conference** in 1942 formalized this persecution with the "Final Solution"—a plan to annihilate all European Jews. This led to mass deportations to labor camps and

immediate executions for those deemed unfit for work. From 1942 to 1945, during the Holocaust, special concentration and death camps were constructed in Poland where millions of Jews were systematically murdered.

# Chapter 19 - Hitler's Foreign Policy

## Foreign Policy to Consolidate Power

### Key Points

1. **Treaty of Versailles:**
  - a. Hitler focused on reversing the Treaty of Versailles, starting with rearmament and the remilitarization of the Rhineland.
2. **Early Diplomatic Moves:**
  - a. Hitler signed a non-aggression pact with Poland, secured the Saar plebiscite, and began rearming Germany.
3. **New Alliances and Conflicts:**
  - a. Established alliances with Italy and Japan, supported Spanish fascists during the Spanish Civil War, and annexed Austria and the Sudetenland.
4. **World War II:**
  - a. The invasion of Poland in 1939 marked the start of WWII, with early successes followed by strategic failures, including the invasion of the Soviet Union and the declaration of war on the United States.
5. **Hitler's Downfall:**
  - a. Overextended German forces, internal opposition, and military defeats led to the collapse of Nazi Germany and Hitler's suicide in 1945.

### Overview

Chapter 19 details Adolf Hitler's aggressive foreign policy from 1933 to the early years of World War II, aimed at overturning the Treaty of Versailles, acquiring territories with ethnic Germans, and securing Lebensraum in Eastern Europe. Hitler's rearmament of Germany and the remilitarization of the Rhineland defied the Treaty of Versailles, while diplomatic moves, such as the non-aggression pact with Poland and the alliances with Italy and Japan, bolstered his position. The annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland, along with support for Spanish fascists,



demonstrated his expansionist ambitions. The invasion of Poland in 1939 triggered World War II, leading to early victories but eventually strategic overreach with the invasions of the Soviet Union and the United States. These actions, coupled with internal opposition and military defeats, resulted in the downfall of Nazi Germany and Hitler's suicide in 1945.

### *Introduction:*

Adolf Hitler's successful foreign policy initiatives from 1933 through 1939, and extending into the early years of World War II, garnered increased support from the German populace for his leadership. Hitler's foreign policy was primarily focused on three objectives: 1) overturning the punitive measures of the **Treaty of Versailles**, 2) acquiring territories inhabited by ethnic and German-speaking populations and 3) securing *Lebensraum* (living space) in Eastern Europe.

## **The Treaty of Versailles**

Hitler's political campaigns and propaganda during the 1920s and 1930s were heavily focused on opposing the provisions of the **Treaty of Versailles**. His initial significant action occurred after the 1933 Geneva Disarmament Conference, where he proposed that other European nations reduce their militaries to the level of Germany's 100,000-man army, as stipulated by the Treaty of Versailles. When France, Britain, and other countries rejected this proposal, Germany withdrew from the conference, exited the **League of Nations**, and initiated a rearmament program for its military.

The Treaty of Versailles also required the Saarland region to provide its resources to France as reparations. In 1935, a plebiscite was held allowing the people of the Saar to vote on whether they wanted to remain with France or rejoin Germany, ultimately voting in favor of Germany. Additionally, the treaty

mandated the military occupation of the Rhineland and prohibited any political union (*Anschluss*) with Austria.

## Non-Aggression Pact with Poland

Following Germany's withdrawal from the **League of Nations**, Hitler pursued bilateral agreements with neighboring countries, beginning with Poland in January 1934. Concerned about the League's ineffectiveness and Germany's rearmament efforts, Poland agreed to a ten-year non-aggression pact with Germany. This pact provided security for Germany's eastern border, undermined France's Eastern European security alliances, and presented Hitler as a leader capable of diplomatic negotiation.

## Saar Plebiscite

The Saar plebiscite, held in January 1935, was a significant event where the residents of the Saar region, which had been under French control since 1919, voted on their future political status. An overwhelming 90% of the population voted to rejoin Germany, marking a significant propaganda victory for the Nazi regime. This outcome not only demonstrated widespread support for Hitler's policies but also bolstered his legitimacy and prestige both domestically and internationally.

## German Rearmament

German rearmament had been surreptitiously ongoing, in violation of the **Treaty of Versailles**, since shortly after World War I, including clandestine efforts to develop an air force in the Soviet Union. By 1935, Hitler publicly justified the rearmament, expanding the army to 500,000 men and unveiling a new **Luftwaffe**. Although Britain and France issued mild rebukes, they took no substantial action to counter these violations.

## Remilitarization of the Rhineland

In 1936, Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland, justifying this action by citing the **Franco-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance** and claiming a fear of encirclement by enemies. The Western powers, including Britain and France, offered no opposition to this breach of the **Treaty of Versailles** and the **Locarno Treaties**. Following this move, Hitler asserted that he had no further territorial ambitions in Europe, a statement that proved to be disingenuous in the subsequent years.

## New Diplomatic Alignments

Hitler established new diplomatic alliances, most notably with Italy, culminating in the formation of the *Rome-Berlin Axis* in October 1936. Additionally, Italy and Germany signed the **Anti-Comintern Pact**, which Japan later joined, creating a coalition against the spread of international communism.

## The Spanish Civil War

From 1936 to 1939, Hitler and Mussolini provided substantial support to Spanish fascists during the Spanish Civil War. Hitler utilized this conflict as an opportunity to test the capabilities of the newly developed German air force and navy. The *Condor Legion*, a unit composed of volunteers from the German Air Force and Army, infamously bombed several targets in Spain, including the town of Guernica, demonstrating the destructive power of modern aerial warfare.

## The Anschluss with Austria

In March 1938, Hitler successfully orchestrated the *Anschluss* (union) with Austria. With considerable support from Austrian Nazis and faced with no international opposition, German troops entered Austria. Subsequently, a plebiscite held in April 1938 purportedly demonstrated over 99% support for the union,

although the results were heavily manipulated to reflect overwhelming approval. This annexation marked a significant step in Hitler's expansionist ambitions and further consolidated his power within the region.

## The Sudetenland

Hitler then turned his attention to the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, where over three million ethnic Germans resided. At the **Munich Conference** in 1938, Britain and France acquiesced to Hitler's demands, allowing him to annex the Sudetenland in exchange for his promise to respect the remainder of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty. Additionally, Britain and Germany signed the **Anglo-German Declaration**, committing to resolve future disputes through consultation.

## Anglo-German Declaration

Despite the agreements made at the **Munich Conference**, Hitler violated his promises by occupying Bohemia and Moravia (now the Czech Republic) in March 1939. This expansion extended beyond German-speaking territories and was part of his broader ambition for *Lebensraum* (living space). This action starkly demonstrated Hitler's disregard for diplomatic agreements and his unrelenting pursuit of territorial expansion.

## Poland and the Start of World War II

Poland refused Germany's demand to return *Danzig*. In response, Britain and France guaranteed Poland's security through a mutual defense pact, prompting Germany to terminate its non-aggression pact with Poland. In May 1939, Germany and Italy solidified their alliance by signing the **Pact of Steel**, a military agreement. Additionally, Hitler secured the **Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact** with the Soviet Union in August 1939, which secretly

stipulated the division of Eastern Europe between the two powers.

## Invasion of Poland

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, utilizing a staged attack as a pretext for the invasion. This aggressive move marked the beginning of World War II. Initially, Germany experienced significant successes, but Hitler's strategic decisions, including the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 and the declaration of war on the United States, overstretched German forces. By late 1942, the tide of war had turned against Germany, ultimately leading to Hitler's downfall in 1945.

## World War II and Hitler's Demise

The early years of World War II (1939-1942) brought significant successes for Germany. However, Hitler's decision to violate the **Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact** and invade the Soviet Union in 1941, followed by his declaration of war on the United States, severely overextended German forces. By late 1942, the tide of the war had shifted against Germany. Internally, Hitler's leadership faced significant challenges, including the July bomb plot of 1944, which aimed to assassinate him and overthrow the Nazi regime. Despite robust propaganda efforts to maintain support, the German military's successive defeats and Hitler's suicide in 1945 culminated in the collapse of Nazi Germany's authoritarian regime.

## Conclusion

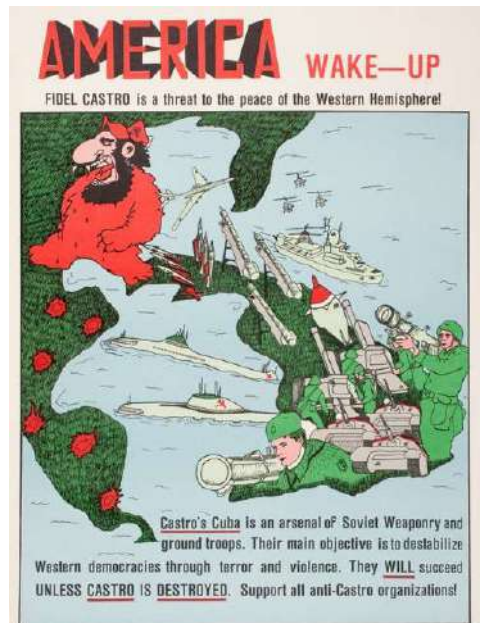
Although Hitler's initial foreign policy successes garnered substantial support, his strategic decisions during World War II, particularly the invasion of the Soviet Union and the declaration of war on the United States, ultimately precipitated the downfall of Nazi Germany.

# Castro's Cuba



**Translation:** "That flag, that sky, this land, we will defend it at whatever price may be necessary", Cuba, 1969

An American propaganda poster commissioned by an unknown conservative group. 1970.



# Historiographical Viewpoints: Interpretations of the Authoritarian State of Fidel Castro

## Common Historiographical Schools of Thought

### Interpretation of the Political School of History

The Political School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by focusing on the political structures, governance, and leadership that defined the regime. This perspective emphasizes Fidel Castro's central role in establishing a one-party state, consolidating power, and implementing socialist policies. It examines the mechanisms of political control, such as the suppression of dissent, the establishment of the Cuban Communist Party as the only legal political entity, and the extensive use of state propaganda and censorship. The Political School also explores Cuba's foreign policy under Castro, including its alliances with the Soviet Union and support for revolutionary movements abroad, and the impact of the U.S. embargo and Cold War dynamics on the island's governance.

"Under Fidel Castro, Cuba became a tightly controlled, one-party state where the Communist Party of Cuba held a monopoly on political power, suppressing any form of opposition and dissent."

Sw eig, Julia E. *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the Urban Underground*. Harvard UP, 2002.

*Criticism of the Political Historical View*

Critics of the Political School's approach argue that it can sometimes overly focus on the authoritarian aspects of Castro's rule, potentially neglecting the broader social, economic, and cultural contexts that shaped and were shaped by the Cuban Revolution. They contend that this perspective may underplay the significant social programs implemented under Castro, such as healthcare and education reforms, which had a profound impact on Cuban society. Additionally, critics suggest that the Political School might overlook the nuances of popular support and resistance, as well as the complexities of Cuba's international relations beyond the Cold War binary.

"While it is crucial to acknowledge the authoritarian nature of Castro's regime, focusing solely on political repression risks ignoring the substantial social reforms and the complex motivations behind Cuban support for the revolution."

Pérez, Louis A. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*. Oxford UP, 1995.

## Interpretation of the Economic School of History

The Economic School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba primarily through the lens of economic policies, practices, and outcomes. This perspective focuses on the centralization of the economy under state control, the implementation of socialist economic policies, and the challenges and transformations that accompanied these changes. It examines the nationalization of industries, the establishment of collectivized agriculture, and the state's efforts to reduce inequality and provide social services like education and healthcare. The Economic School also explores Cuba's economic relationship with the Soviet Union, the impact



of the U.S. embargo, and the economic crisis that followed the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

"The Cuban economy under Castro was marked by a shift towards a centrally planned model, heavily dependent on Soviet subsidies, which allowed for significant social achievements but also led to economic inefficiencies and a lack of diversification."

Mesa-Lago, Carmelo. *Cuba's Aborted Reform: Socioeconomic Effects, International Comparisons, and Transition Policies*. University Press of Florida, 2005.

### *Criticism of the Economic Historical View*

Critics of the Economic School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the role of economic factors and policies, potentially neglecting the broader political, social, and cultural dimensions of the Cuban state. They contend that this perspective may underplay the ideological motivations behind Cuba's economic policies and the regime's efforts to achieve social justice and equity. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing too narrowly on economic outcomes might overlook the resilience and adaptability of the Cuban economy, particularly in response to external pressures like the U.S. embargo and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

"While the economic analysis of Cuba under Castro is crucial, it often fails to account for the broader ideological and social goals that guided economic policy, as well as the significant achievements in healthcare and education despite economic challenges."

Pérez-Stable, Marifeli. *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy*. Oxford UP, 1999.

## Interpretation of the Social School of History

The Social School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by focusing on the experiences, behaviors, and transformations within Cuban society under the regime. This perspective emphasizes the social changes brought about by the revolution, including improvements in healthcare, education, and social equity. It examines how these policies impacted different segments of the population, such as women, racial minorities, and rural communities. The Social School also explores the role of propaganda, political indoctrination, and the creation of a new Cuban identity aligned with socialist ideals. Additionally, it investigates the daily lives of ordinary Cubans, the social controls imposed by the state, and the ways in which people adapted to or resisted these changes.

"The Cuban Revolution brought significant social transformations, particularly in healthcare and education, fundamentally altering the landscape of Cuban society and aiming to create a more egalitarian social order."

Feinberg, Richard E. *Open for Business: Building the New Cuban Economy*. Brookings Institution Press, 2016.

### *Criticism of the Social Historical View*

Critics of the Social School's approach argue that it can sometimes idealize the social achievements of the Cuban state while downplaying issues such as political repression, lack of personal freedoms, and economic hardships. They contend that this perspective may not fully address the limitations and failures of social policies, including the suppression of dissent and the challenges faced by those marginalized or critical of the regime. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing heavily on social aspects might overlook the broader political and economic

context that shaped and constrained social policy implementation.

"While the social gains of the Cuban Revolution are often highlighted, it is essential to critically examine the state's authoritarian control and the suppression of civil liberties, which complicate the narrative of social progress."

Hernandez, Rafael. *Cuba and the Future: An Island in Transition*. Macmillan, 1994.

## Interpretation of the Cultural School of History

The Cultural School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by focusing on the cultural policies, artistic expressions, and identity formation under the regime. This perspective examines how the Cuban government used culture as a tool for political and ideological purposes, promoting socialist values and Cuban nationalism. It looks at the state's role in controlling and guiding cultural production, including literature, music, film, and art, as well as the efforts to create a unified national identity aligned with revolutionary ideals. The Cultural School also explores how cultural policies influenced everyday life, from censorship and propaganda to the celebration of Cuban traditions and the promotion of new cultural forms that reflected the revolution's goals.

"Cuba's revolutionary government leveraged culture as a crucial element of its political project, using artistic and cultural expressions to foster a collective identity and propagate socialist ideals."

Whitney, Robert. *State and Revolution in Cuba: Mass Mobilization and Political Change, 1920-1940*. University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

*Criticism of the Cultural Historical View*

Critics of the Cultural School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the role of cultural policies and artistic expressions, potentially overlooking the broader socio-political and economic contexts. They contend that this perspective may not fully address the limitations and controls imposed on cultural production, including censorship, persecution of dissenting artists, and the state's manipulation of culture for propaganda purposes. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing on cultural achievements and innovations might underplay the human rights abuses and the lack of freedom of expression experienced under the regime.

"While the revolutionary government's promotion of culture is notable, it is crucial to recognize the restrictive environment in which artists operated, where creative freedom was often curtailed in favor of ideological conformity."

Menéndez, Lillian Guerra. *Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959–1971*. University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

*Interpretation of the Intellectual School of History*

The Intellectual School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by examining the ideological and theoretical frameworks that shaped and justified the regime's policies and governance. This perspective focuses on the intellectual influences that informed the Cuban Revolution, including Marxism-Leninism, anti-imperialism, and nationalist thought. It explores how these ideas were adapted to the Cuban context, particularly through the writings and speeches of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and other revolutionary leaders. The Intellectual School also considers the role of education, intellectual discourse, and the state's control

over knowledge production and dissemination, analyzing how intellectuals and academics were engaged in or suppressed by the regime.

"The intellectual foundations of the Cuban Revolution were rooted in a unique blend of Marxist-Leninist theory, Cuban nationalism, and a profound commitment to anti-imperialism, which together provided the ideological backbone for the state's policies and actions."

Kapcia, Antoni. *Cuba in Revolution: A History Since the Fifties*. Reaktion Books, 2008.

### *Criticism of the Intellectual Historical View*

Critics of the Intellectual School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the theoretical and ideological aspects of Castro's regime, potentially neglecting the practical realities and the regime's impact on daily life. They contend that this perspective may underplay the coercive measures used to enforce ideological conformity, such as censorship, political repression, and the marginalization of dissenting intellectual voices. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing too much on the ideological rhetoric of the regime might obscure the pragmatic aspects of governance and the complexities of Cuban society under communist rule.

"While the intellectual underpinnings of the Cuban Revolution are significant, they must be critically examined in light of the state's authoritarian practices, which often stifled genuine intellectual debate and freedom of expression."

De la Fuente, Alejandro. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba*. University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

## Interpretation of the Marxist School of History

The Marxist School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba as a revolutionary state fundamentally shaped by Marxist-Leninist ideology. This perspective emphasizes the economic and class struggle aspects of the Cuban Revolution, viewing the state's actions as efforts to dismantle the capitalist structures and implement socialist principles. The Marxist School focuses on the nationalization of industries, land reforms, the redistribution of wealth, and the creation of a planned economy as means to eliminate class disparities and promote social equality. It also examines Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union and its role in the global socialist movement, emphasizing the ideological commitment to anti-imperialism and solidarity with other revolutionary movements.

"The Cuban Revolution represented a profound break from capitalist exploitation and imperialist control, striving to build a socialist society based on principles of equality, social justice, and economic self-sufficiency."

Chomsky, Aviva. *A History of the Cuban Revolution*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

### *Criticism of the Marxist Historical View*

Critics of the Marxist School's approach argue that it can sometimes idealize or romanticize the Cuban Revolution, downplaying the authoritarian aspects of Castro's rule and the limitations of the socialist experiment. They contend that this perspective may overlook the human rights abuses, lack of political freedoms, and economic challenges faced by the Cuban population under communist governance. Additionally, critics suggest that the Marxist view might not fully account for the complexities and contradictions within Cuban society, including

issues of race, gender, and political dissent, which were often suppressed or marginalized by the state.

"While the Cuban Revolution's goals of social equity and anti-imperialism are noteworthy, the reality of political repression and economic hardship under Castro's regime complicates the narrative of revolutionary idealism."

Suchlicki, Jaime. *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro and Beyond*. Potomac Books, 2002.

## Interpretation of the Annales School of History

The Annales School of history, known for its emphasis on long-term historical structures and broader societal contexts, interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by examining the deep-rooted social, economic, and environmental factors that shaped the Cuban Revolution and its aftermath. This perspective looks beyond political events and figures to understand the historical processes and collective mentalities that influenced Cuban society. The Annales School considers the impact of geography, climate, and demographic trends, as well as the long-standing issues of inequality and colonial legacies. It also explores how cultural and social structures, such as family life, education, and public health, were transformed under the revolutionary government.

"The Cuban Revolution must be seen within the context of a long history of social inequality, economic dependency, and colonial exploitation, which provided the fertile ground for revolutionary change and the reshaping of Cuban society."

Gott, Richard. *Cuba: A New History*. Yale UP, 2004.

*Criticism of the Annales Historical View*

Critics of the Annales School's approach argue that its focus on long-term structures and broad societal trends can sometimes obscure the importance of political dynamics, individual agency, and immediate events. They contend that while this perspective provides valuable insights into the underlying conditions that shaped Cuba, it may underplay the specific actions and policies of the Castro government, including instances of political repression and human rights abuses. Additionally, critics suggest that the Annales approach might not fully account for the complexities and nuances of ideological, cultural, and international influences on the Cuban state.

"The Annales approach, with its emphasis on long-term historical structures, can sometimes downplay the decisive role of political leadership and the immediate impact of state policies on the lives of ordinary Cubans."

Kapcia, Antoni. *Leadership in the Cuban Revolution: The Unseen Story*. Zed Books, 2014.

## Interpretation of the Postcolonial School of History

The Postcolonial School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by examining the legacies of colonialism and imperialism in shaping the island's political, social, and economic structures. This perspective highlights how Cuba's colonial past, characterized by Spanish colonization and later U.S. influence, influenced the emergence of nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiments that fueled the Cuban Revolution. It also focuses on how the revolutionary government sought to break free from these colonial and neocolonial dependencies, asserting a new national identity and sovereignty. The Postcolonial School emphasizes Cuba's role in global anti-colonial movements and its solidarity



*Authoritarian States: Hiter and Castro* Hutchings  
with other postcolonial nations, particularly in Africa and Latin America, as part of its foreign policy and ideological stance.

"The Cuban Revolution represented a profound rejection of the colonial and neocolonial order, as it sought to dismantle the structures of dependency and create an autonomous, socialist state in defiance of Western imperialism."

Gott, Richard. *Cuba: A New History*. Yale UP, 2004.

### *Criticism of the Postcolonial Historical View*

Critics of the Postcolonial School's approach argue that it can sometimes romanticize or idealize the Cuban Revolution's anti-imperialist and nationalist aspects, potentially overlooking the internal contradictions and authoritarian practices of the regime. They contend that this perspective may underplay the human rights abuses, restrictions on political freedoms, and economic hardships faced by the Cuban population under communist rule. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing too heavily on external influences and anti-colonial rhetoric might obscure the complexities of Cuban society and the diversity of experiences among its people.

"While the Postcolonial perspective rightly emphasizes Cuba's struggle against imperialism, it can sometimes gloss over the regime's authoritarianism and the limitations imposed on civil liberties and political pluralism."

Pérez, Louis A. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*. Oxford UP, 1995.

# Chapter 20 - Foundations of the Cuban Revolution

## Key Points

### 1. **Background of the Spanish-American War:**

- a. **Cuban Independence Struggle:** Cuba was fighting for independence from Spanish rule, which resonated with the American public due to reports of Spanish atrocities.
- b. **USS Maine Incident:** The explosion of the USS Maine in Havana harbor, likely caused by accidental coal gas ignition but attributed to a Spanish sea mine, led to American intervention.
- c. **War Declaration:** President William McKinley, pressured by public sentiment and yellow journalism, secured congressional approval to intervene, resulting in the Spanish-American War.

### 2. **Aftermath of the Spanish-American War:**

- a. **US Victory and Treaty:** The US swiftly defeated Spanish forces, leading to Cuba's nominal independence, although Cuban rebel leaders were excluded from negotiations.
- b. **Platt Amendment:** The US granted formal independence in 1902 but retained significant control through the Platt Amendment, allowing intervention and establishing Guantanamo Bay.
- c. **US Occupation:** Following election fraud and civil unrest in 1905, the US occupied Cuba until 1909, demonstrating its readiness to intervene in Cuban affairs.

### 3. **Economic Boom and Bust:**

- a. **Prosperity and Dependency:** Cuba's economy thrived during World War I due to high sugar prices but suffered a severe downturn when prices fell in 1920, leading to American economic dominance.
- b. **Tourism and Crime:** By the 1920s, Cuba became a tourist destination and a hub for organized crime, with American businesses dominating key industries.
- c. **Political Unrest:** The global economic crisis in 1929 led to protests against President Gerardo Machado, resulting in

US intervention and his exile, paving the way for military control by figures like Fulgencio Batista.

4. **Rise of Fulgencio Batista:**

- a. **Background and Political Rise:** Batista, from humble beginnings, rose through the military ranks and played a crucial role in the 1933 coup, becoming Cuba's de facto ruler.
- b. **Presidency and Reforms:** Elected president in 1940, Batista implemented progressive reforms, maintained close ties with the US, and contributed to World War II efforts.
- c. **Coup and Return to Power:** After relocating to the US, Batista returned to Cuba in 1952, staged a coup when his party trailed in the election, and seized power again.

5. **Prelude to the Revolution:**

- a. **Economic and Social Issues:** Despite economic development, corruption, inequality, and American control over the economy persisted, with one-third of Cubans living in poverty.
- b. **Opposition to Batista:** Leftist opposition grew, led by Fidel Castro, a lawyer and activist against US imperialism. After failed legal efforts, Castro and his brother Raul founded a resistance movement, setting the stage for the Cuban Revolution.

## Overview

Chapter 20 details the historical foundations leading up to the Cuban Revolution, highlighting the impact of the Spanish-American War, US intervention, and economic fluctuations on Cuba's political landscape. The rise of Fulgencio Batista and the subsequent economic and social issues fostered an environment ripe for revolution, with Fidel Castro emerging as a key opposition leader. This chapter underscores the complex interplay of foreign influence, economic dependency, and internal strife that culminated in the Cuban Revolution.

## Background of the Spanish-American War

Cuba, a small island nation, played a pivotal role during the Cold War, situated less than 100 miles from the American coast and becoming the focal point of one of the most perilous moments in the conflict. Understanding Cuba's trajectory necessitates a journey back to the late 19th century. During this period, the United States, propelled by an accident and yellow journalism, engaged in a war with Spain, whose colonial empire was in decline. By this time, Cuba was already fighting for independence from Spanish rule, a struggle that deeply resonated with the American public. Reports of alleged Spanish atrocities, though possibly exaggerated, fueled American desire to intervene.

In response to potential violence against Americans in Havana, the US dispatched the USS Maine in January 1898. The Maine, a US Navy armored cruiser, exploded off the Cuban coast, killing over 200 American sailors. Though modern historians believe the explosion was likely due to an accidental ignition of coal gases, it was attributed at the time to a Spanish sea mine, leading to public outcry and demands for retaliation. President William McKinley, pressured by public sentiment and sensationalist media led by figures like William Randolph Hearst, sought congressional approval to intervene in Cuba's revolution, resulting in a declaration of war on Spain on April 25, 1898.

## The Aftermath of the Spanish-American War

The ensuing conflict was decidedly one-sided, with the United States swiftly dismantling Spanish forces in Cuba and simultaneously seizing Spanish colonies in Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Spain surrendered by July, and a peace treaty granted Cuba its independence. However, the Cuban rebel leaders were notably absent from the peace negotiations, highlighting the limited role Cuba played in shaping its own future.

In 1902, the United States enacted the Platt Amendment, granting formal independence to Cuba on May 20th. Yet, Cubans

today often do not recognize this as true independence. The subsequent Cuban-American Treaty of Relations leased Guantanamo Bay to the United States, establishing a military port and, later, a controversial prison. This treaty included a clause permitting US intervention for the preservation of Cuban independence and the protection of life, property, and individual liberty. When President Estrada Palma rigged the 1905 election, resulting in civil unrest, both factions requested US intervention. President Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of War, William H. Taft, declared himself the provisional leader of Cuba, initiating an American occupation that lasted several years. This occupation ended in 1909 following elections, but it underscored the US's readiness to intervene in Cuban affairs.

## Economic Boom and Bust

The following years were economically prosperous for Cuba, particularly during World War I, which created a sugar shortage. Cuba capitalized on its primary cash crop, experiencing significant economic growth. However, reliance on a single commodity posed risks, and when sugar prices plummeted in 1920, the Cuban economy suffered. Foreign, primarily American, corporations began investing heavily in Cuban industries, leading to economic dependency and capital outflow. By the 1920s, Cuba became a haven for American tourists, with American-owned businesses proliferating. This era saw the rise of organized crime and Cuba's transformation into a Caribbean Las Vegas, with gambling and prostitution becoming significant economic sectors.

President Gerardo Machado, increasingly unpopular for his broken promises, faced widespread discontent. The global economic downturn in 1929 exacerbated Cuba's problems, leading to protests and terrorism. US intervention in 1933, threatening invasion, forced Machado into exile and installed a

temporary government, which quickly gave way to military control by figures like Fulgencio Batista.

## Rise of Fulgencio Batista

Fulgencio Batista, born in 1901 to war veterans, rose from modest beginnings to become a pivotal figure in Cuban politics. Initially a laborer, Batista joined the military, where his skills as a stenographer facilitated his rise. He played a crucial role in the 1933 coup and subsequently became the de facto ruler of Cuba, although nominally, the country was led by a series of weak presidents.

In 1940, Cuba adopted a new constitution that allowed unions and healthcare reforms. Batista was elected president and pursued progressive reforms tempered with capitalist principles, maintaining favorable relations with the United States. His administration participated in World War II, contributing to the Battle of the Caribbean. In 1944, barred from re-election, Batista saw his chosen successor defeated and subsequently relocated to the United States, where he lived lavishly, allegedly on funds taken from the Cuban treasury. Despite being elected to the Cuban senate from abroad, Batista returned to Cuba to contest the 1952 election but, finding his party trailing, staged a coup.

## Prelude to the Revolution

By the time Batista seized power, Cuba was economically developed but plagued by corruption and inequality. One in three Cubans lived in poverty, and American control over the economy deepened. Opposition to Batista grew, particularly among leftists. Fidel Castro, a prominent figure in this opposition, emerged as a key leader. Born in 1926 to immigrant parents, Castro became a lawyer and activist against imperialism, particularly US influence. After several failed attempts to effect change through legal means, Castro, along with his brother Raul, founded a resistance movement, setting the stage for the Cuban Revolution.

# Chapter 21 - Emergence of Castro's Cuba

## Key Points

### 1. Cuba in the 1950s:

- a. **Economic Vulnerabilities:** Cuba's economy was heavily reliant on sugar, making it a monoculture economy. Three-fifths of the workforce was employed in sugar plantations, and sugar accounted for a quarter of exports.
- b. **Dependence on the U.S.:** The United States was Cuba's largest trading partner, paying inflated rates for sugar and supplying manufactured goods. American investors controlled significant portions of Cuba's infrastructure, creating economic dependency.
- c. **Wealth Disparities:** There was a significant gap between the wealthy elite and the impoverished masses.

### 2. Political Weakness:

- a. **Platt Amendment:** Incorporated into the Cuban Constitution in 1903, it allowed the U.S. to intervene militarily and restricted Cuba's ability to engage with other nations.
- b. **Dictatorship of Batista:** Fulgencio Batista seized power through a coup in 1952, supported by Cuba's elite and American business interests. His regime was marked by corruption and political repression.

### 3. Opposition to Batista:

- a. **Resistance:** Batista faced resistance from student groups, rural workers, and the Communist Party. His increasing corruption and repression led to a loss of U.S. support.
- b. **Fidel Castro:** A lawyer and member of the Partido Ortodoxo, Castro's political ambitions were thwarted by Batista's coup, leading him to pursue revolutionary action.

### 4. Moncada Barracks Attack:

- a. **Failed Assault:** In 1953, Castro and his followers attempted to seize the Moncada Barracks but failed, resulting in



Castro's arrest. His "History Will Absolve Me" speech during his trial outlined his revolutionary ideals.

- b. **26th of July Movement:** The failed assault led to the formation of this movement, named after the attack date. Castro gained popularity due to the brutal treatment of rebels by Batista's regime.

5. **Influence of Che Guevara:**

- a. **Meeting in Mexico:** After his release in 1955, Castro met Che Guevara in Mexico. Guevara, influenced by the CIA-backed overthrow in Guatemala, emphasized guerrilla warfare and anti-American sentiments.
- b. **Granma Attack:** In 1956, Castro, Guevara, and others launched an attack from Mexico, which failed. However, they continued their efforts in the Sierra Maestra mountains, gaining support from local peasants.

6. **Revolutionary Momentum:**

- a. **Radio Propaganda:** Castro used radio broadcasts to spread his message, portraying himself as a freedom fighter. His forces grew as they gained popular support.
- b. **U.S. Embargo:** In 1957, the U.S. withdrew support for Batista, imposing an embargo that weakened his regime and bolstered Castro's forces.

7. **Fall of Batista:**

- a. **Autumn Offensive of 1958:** Castro's guerrilla tactics led to decisive victories, causing Batista's regime to collapse. In January 1959, Castro and his forces entered Havana, marking the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

## Overview

Chapter 21 details the emergence of Fidel Castro's Cuba, highlighting the economic and political challenges of the 1950s, the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, and the revolutionary efforts led by Castro and Che Guevara. Through guerrilla warfare, strategic propaganda, and growing popular support, Castro successfully overthrew Batista's regime, transforming Cuba's political landscape and establishing a new government. This

chapter underscores the significant events and figures that shaped the Cuban Revolution.

### *Introduction*

The United States was Cuba's most significant trading partner, paying inflated rates for Cuban sugar and supplying American manufactured goods to Cuban markets. This economic relationship was crucial; any disruption, such as the repressive regime of Fulgencio Batista, could severely impact Cuba's economy. Additionally, American investors controlled substantial portions of Cuba's gas, electricity, rail, and banking systems, creating a deep economic connection between the two countries. This dependence on the United States was further complicated by a significant disparity in wealth between a small number of affluent Cuban elites and the impoverished masses across the nation.

### **Economic Weakness in Cuba**

Cuba also faced significant political vulnerabilities. Following Cuban independence after the Spanish-American War, the United States incorporated the **Platt Amendment** into the Cuban Constitution in 1903. This amendment granted the United States preferential political terms over Cuba, including the right to militarily intervene if conditions in Cuba were deemed unfavorable to U.S. interests. Furthermore, Cuba was prohibited from entering into agreements with third-party nations without U.S. approval, and the United States secured a permanent lease on the naval base at *Guantanamo Bay*. This economic reliance on the United States impeded Cuba's ability to achieve full political independence, further entrenching its dependence on American economic and political influence.

## Political Weakness

Compounding Cuba's issues was the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Initially a military general and president of Cuba in the 1940s, Batista seized power through a coup in March 1952, ousting a democratically elected president and suspending the Cuban Constitution. His regime received backing from Cuba's wealthy elite and their business counterparts in the United States. Under Batista, Cuba became a hotspot for corrupt activities and interactions with the U.S. Mafia, transforming Havana into a luxurious resort destination for affluent Americans throughout the 1950s. Consequently, the disparity between the wealthy and the impoverished in Cuba continued to grow, exacerbating social and economic tensions.

## Fulgencio Batista

Opposition to Batista intensified following his 1952 coup. He encountered resistance from various factions, including student groups demanding greater political rights, rural agricultural workers suffering from economic hardships, and the growing Communist Party, which opposed the prevailing economic conditions faced by ordinary Cubans. Over time, Batista's increasing corruption and political repression led to a loss of support from the U.S. government, further weakening his regime's stability.

## Opposition to Batista

Turning our focus to Fidel Castro, he was an educated lawyer in Cuba who dedicated his efforts to advocating for the rights of impoverished workers. During the late 1940s, Castro participated in revolutionary movements outside of Cuba, notably in the Dominican Republic and Colombia. Upon returning to Cuba, he aspired to rise through the political ranks to challenge the corrupt government. Castro was a member of the *Partido Ortodoxo*, a left-

wing political party that supported anti-corruption measures and the nationalization of foreign businesses to retain more wealth within the nation.

## Fidel Castro

The 1952 coup by Batista extinguished any hope Castro had of advancing through legitimate political channels, propelling him towards revolutionary action. This revolutionary endeavor commenced on July 26, 1953, with the assault on the Moncada Barracks. Castro, along with a small cadre of followers, attempted to seize the Moncada military barracks in an effort to overthrow Batista. The attack was a complete failure, resulting in Castro's arrest and subsequent trial. During his trial, he delivered the renowned "History Will Absolve Me" speech, in which he advocated for the restoration of the Constitution, land reform, educational reform, and an end to corruption. Although Castro was sentenced to 15 years in prison, he served only two years before being released.

## Moncada Barracks Attack

The failed assault on the Moncada Barracks gave rise to the 26th of July Movement, Castro's political and military initiative aimed at overthrowing Batista. The brutal treatment of the rebels by Batista's regime attracted negative attention and elevated Castro's status among the common people. In 1954, Batista held elections to create an appearance of democracy, but they were neither free nor fair, especially as Castro remained imprisoned. In 1955, seeking to curry favor with the populace, Batista released many political prisoners, including Castro.

Following his release, Castro relocated to Mexico, where he organized the 26th of July Movement and met Che Guevara, who significantly influenced his revolutionary ideals. Meanwhile, anti-Batista sentiments continued to grow in Cuba, prompting

Batista to cancel future elections in an attempt to quell the increasing unrest.

## Effects of the Moncada Assault

While in Mexico, Fidel Castro was profoundly influenced by Che Guevara, an Argentinian revolutionary. Guevara, who was staunchly anti-capitalist and anti-American, aimed to incite a revolution in Cuba. His ideology was significantly shaped by the overthrow of Guatemala's democratically elected president in 1954, an event supported by the U.S. **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**. Guevara believed in the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare and the necessity of garnering support from the common people to achieve revolutionary success. He viewed the United States as a consistent adversary of the populace, perpetually supporting repressive Latin American governments.

## Impact of Che Guevara

The 26th of July Movement, led by Fidel Castro, launched the "Granma" attack, during which over 80 fighters sailed from Mexico to southern Cuba with the intention of seizing Santiago and igniting a revolution. The attack failed, resulting in most of the attackers being killed or captured. However, Castro, his brother Raúl, and Che Guevara managed to escape to the Sierra Maestra mountains, where they continued their revolutionary efforts.

In the Sierra Maestra, the movement gradually gained momentum as local peasants, disillusioned with the government, began to view Castro as a more supportive figure. Castro's promise of reforms once victorious resonated with the rural population, contributing to the growth of the revolutionary movement. Guevara's influence was instrumental in shaping the strategies and ideologies of the revolution, emphasizing guerrilla warfare and the importance of popular support.

## The Granma Attack

Fidel Castro effectively utilized radio broadcasts to disseminate propaganda and conducted interviews with the foreign press, portraying himself as a champion of freedom. As Castro's forces, along with other rebel groups, intensified their attacks, Batista's repressive measures increased. In 1957, the United States withdrew its support for Batista and eventually imposed a comprehensive embargo on the Cuban government, which significantly bolstered Castro's forces.

## Propaganda and Guerrilla Warfare

Fidel Castro adeptly harnessed the power of radio broadcasts to spread propaganda, enhancing his image as a valiant freedom fighter. Through strategic interviews with the foreign press, he effectively communicated his revolutionary ideals and garnered international attention. As Castro's forces, along with other rebel factions, escalated their attacks, Batista's regime responded with increasing repression.

In 1957, the United States withdrew its support for Batista, culminating in a full embargo against the Cuban government. This shift significantly bolstered Castro's forces by undermining Batista's political and military standing.

The *Autumn Offensive* of 1958 marked a turning point, with Castro's guerrilla tactics leading to a series of decisive victories. Batista's regime, weakened and unable to withstand the relentless pressure, eventually collapsed. In December 1958, Batista fled Cuba, and by January 1959, Fidel Castro, his brother Raúl, Che Guevara, and the 26th of July Movement triumphantly entered Havana, taking control of the government and signaling a new era in Cuban history.

## Conclusion

The ascent of Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution was characterized by substantial economic and political challenges, fervent opposition to Batista's corrupt regime, and strategic guerrilla warfare. Castro's leadership, bolstered by his alliance with Che Guevara, was instrumental in overthrowing Batista and establishing a new government in Cuba. Through adept use of propaganda and tactical warfare, Castro succeeded in rallying widespread support and transforming the nation's political landscape.

# Chapter 22 - Establishment of Castro's Dictatorship

## Key Points

1. **Consolidation of Castro's Rule:**
  - a. **Government Reorganization:** After the revolution in 1959, Castro quickly restructured the government, creating the Fundamental Law of the Republic. This established a political cabinet with Castro as the prime minister, giving him ultimate political authority.
  - b. **Control Over Media and Education:** Freedom of the press was severely restricted, and the government took control of the University of Havana.
  - c. **Public Show Trials and Land Reform:** Supporters of Batista were publicly tried and executed. Castro's promise of land reform was fulfilled by confiscating properties from Cuban elites. Pro-Castro communists took control of labor unions.
2. **Towards a One-Party State:**
  - a. **Formation of a Unified Party:** Castro merged various revolutionary organizations into the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations, which later became the United Party of the Socialist Revolution, and eventually the Cuban Communist Party in 1965.
  - b. **Repression of Opposition:** Leaders of the 26th of July Movement who opposed the move towards communism, like Huber Matos, were arrested and charged with treason.
3. **Cuban-American Relations:**
  - a. **Initial Support and Subsequent Deterioration:** Initially, the U.S. supported Castro's rise to power but withdrew support as he embraced communism and nationalized American-owned businesses.
  - b. **Economic Agreements with the Soviet Union:** The nationalization led to economic agreements with the Soviet Union, further aligning Cuba with communist ideologies.
4. **Bay of Pigs Invasion:**



- a. **Failed U.S. Invasion:** In April 1961, a CIA-orchestrated invasion by Cuban exiles failed. This disaster embarrassed the U.S. and President Kennedy while providing a propaganda victory for Castro.
  - b. **Declaration of Communism:** In response, Castro declared Cuba a communist nation and a Marxist-Leninist state, further consolidating his power and aligning with the Soviet Union.
5. **Cuban-Soviet Relations:**
- a. **Deepening Alliance:** Post-invasion, the Soviet Union became Cuba's primary trade partner, extensively arming the Cuban military and providing economic support.
  - b. **Cuban Missile Crisis:** In October 1962, the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba led to a tense standoff. The crisis ended with the Soviet Union agreeing to remove the missiles in exchange for the U.S. promising not to invade Cuba and secretly agreeing to remove American missiles from Turkey.

## Overview

Chapter 22 details how Fidel Castro established his dictatorship in Cuba following the 1959 revolution. Castro consolidated his power by reorganizing the government, restricting freedom of the press, and executing supporters of the former Batista regime. He moved swiftly towards a one-party state, repressing opposition and merging revolutionary groups into the Cuban Communist Party. Relations with the United States deteriorated as Castro nationalized American businesses and aligned with the Soviet Union, culminating in the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis. The deepening Cuban-Soviet alliance marked a significant period in Cold War history, solidifying Cuba's position as a communist state under Castro's authoritarian rule.

## Consolidation of Castro's Rule

We will now examine the establishment of Castro's authoritarian state following his successful revolution in 1959. After seizing power, Castro swiftly reorganized the government under his control. The **Fundamental Law of the Republic** was drafted, essentially creating a political cabinet—a council of ministers led by Fidel Castro as prime minister—granting him ultimate political authority over the country.

Freedom of the press in Cuba was severely restricted, and the government took control of the University of Havana. Public show trials were conducted for supporters of the Batista regime and former military officers, which were followed by numerous public executions. To fulfill Castro's promise of land reform to the peasants, the property of the Cuban elites was rapidly confiscated by the government. Additionally, pro-Castro communists assumed control of the labor unions in Cuba, consolidating his power further.

## Towards a One-Party State

Castro swiftly advanced towards establishing a one-party state in Cuba. He consolidated various revolutionary organizations, including his own *26th of July Movement*, under the umbrella of the **Integrated Revolutionary Organizations**. This coalition later evolved into the **United Party of the Socialist Revolution**, led by Castro. In 1965, this organization was transformed into the **Cuban Communist Party**, solidifying the one-party system that governed Cuba.

Opposition to this move towards communism was met with severe repression. Notably, leaders of the *26th of July Movement* who resisted this transition, such as Huber Matos, were arrested and charged with treason against the revolution, showcasing the regime's intolerance towards dissent.

## Cuban-American Relations

Cuban-American relations deteriorated significantly as Castro advanced towards a one-party state and nationalized American-owned businesses. Initially, the United States supported Castro's rise to power, having withdrawn their support from the Batista regime. However, Castro's embrace of communism within Cuba strained this support. The nationalization of foreign-owned businesses, including prominent companies such as Royal Dutch Shell, Texaco, Standard Oil, Coca-Cola, and Sears, led to a definitive withdrawal of American backing.

This loss of support from the United States compelled Cuba to seek economic agreements with the Soviet Union, further solidifying its alignment with communist ideologies. The tension between Cuba and the United States escalated, culminating in the Bay of Pigs invasion, a failed attempt by U.S.-backed exiles to overthrow Castro's government. This event underscored the deepening rift between the two nations and marked a significant moment in the Cold War.

## Bay of Pigs Invasion

The Bay of Pigs invasion was a key component of President Dwight Eisenhower's **New Look** program aimed at containing communism. The CIA orchestrated covert operations to support anti-communist movements across the Americas. In 1960, the CIA utilized Guatemala as a training base for Cuban expatriates, preparing them for an assault on Castro's Cuba with the hope of inciting a popular uprising against his regime.

The invasion, executed under President John F. Kennedy in April 1961, was disastrous from the outset. The Cuban military anticipated the attack, there was no significant popular support, and the United States provided only limited military assistance. The Bay of Pigs invasion became a major embarrassment for both

the United States and President Kennedy, while serving as a significant propaganda victory for Castro.

In response, Castro consolidated his power by arguing that unity was essential to resist future U.S. invasions. He declared Cuba a fully communist nation under a one-party state and proclaimed himself a Marxist-Leninist. This move further entrenched Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union and heightened Cold War tensions.

## Cuban-Soviet Relations

Following the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Soviet Union emerged as Cuba's primary trade partner. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev pledged to defend Cuba against any future U.S. aggression, declaring the **Monroe Doctrine** obsolete. The Soviet Union began to arm the Cuban military extensively and provided millions of dollars in credit and equipment. This support included the deployment of long-range nuclear missiles in Cuba, culminating in the Cuban Missile Crisis. This period marked a significant deepening of the alliance between Cuba and the Soviet Union, solidifying Cuba's position as a key player in the Cold War dynamics.

## Cuban Missile Crisis

In October 1962, an American CIA U2 surveillance jet discovered Soviet missiles being installed in Cuba, initiating the Cuban Missile Crisis. The United States responded by implementing a naval blockade around Cuba to prevent further missiles from arriving, while also mobilizing its military for a potential full-scale invasion. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev equated the presence of these missiles in Cuba with American missiles stationed in Turkey.

The crisis was ultimately resolved through a negotiated agreement. The Soviet Union agreed to remove the missiles from

Cuba, and in return, the United States promised not to invade Cuba. Additionally, President John F. Kennedy secretly agreed to remove American missiles from Turkey after the U.S. elections in November 1962. Although Fidel Castro was dissatisfied with the Soviet decision to withdraw the missiles, he portrayed the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis as a propaganda victory, claiming that he had played a crucial role in safeguarding Cuba from future U.S. invasions.

# Chapter 23 - Opposition in Castro's Cuba

## Key Points

### 1. Sources of Opposition:

- a. **Economic Policies and Authoritarianism:** Failures in economic policies and increasing authoritarianism sparked resistance against Castro's regime. The revolution's unfulfilled promises and disparities between Castro's international popularity and internal realities further fueled dissent.
- b. **Diverse Opposition Groups:** Opposition stemmed from former landowners and industrialists, peasants affected by collectivization, pro-American Cubans, writers and artists facing censorship, and academics protesting the loss of academic freedom.

### 2. Suppression of Dissent:

- a. **Curtailement of Freedoms:** Freedoms of speech and press were severely restricted, and show trials were conducted to intimidate political opponents.
- b. **Notable Case:** Poet Heberto Padilla's arrest and public trial diminished Castro's support domestically and internationally, yet instilled fear among artists during the "gray period" of the 1970s.

### 3. Weak and Fragmented Opposition:

- a. **Lack of Organization:** Opposition remained weak and disorganized, lacking the coordination to effectively challenge the government.
- b. **Strong Police State:** The regime's powerful surveillance apparatus and propaganda effectively portrayed dissent as unpatriotic, further stifling opposition efforts.

### 4. Surveillance and Repression:

- a. **Intelligence and Surveillance:** The Cuban State Police's General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI), modeled after the Soviet KGB, played a crucial role in uncovering opposition.
- b. **Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs):** Local communities and workplaces organized CDRs to

report counter-revolutionary activities, with a significant portion of the population involved.

5. **Labor Camps and Re-Education:**

- a. **Repressive Measures:** Political prisoners, youths adopting American styles, and homosexuals were sent to labor camps for re-education in revolutionary doctrine, minimizing opposition through extensive surveillance and repression.

6. **Assassination Attempts:**

- a. **Numerous Attempts:** Castro survived hundreds of assassination attempts, many orchestrated by the CIA and local political opponents. The failure of these attempts bolstered Castro's propaganda, portraying him as invincible.

7. **Emigration as a Tool:**

- a. **Exodus of Dissidents:** Over 350,000 Cubans fled the island, primarily to the United States. Emigration of dissenters reduced internal opposition, but also led to a brain drain of skilled and educated individuals.
- b. **Maribel Boatlift:** In 1980, over 125,000 Cubans departed for Florida, including many prisoners and mentally ill individuals, after protests against food rations and economic hardships.

8. **Enduring Regime:**

- a. **Failure to Overthrow Castro:** Despite significant opposition, limited internal organization and the exodus of dissenters ensured that opposition efforts never succeeded in overthrowing the regime.

## Overview

Chapter 23 discusses the various sources and methods of opposition to Fidel Castro's authoritarian regime in Cuba. Despite economic failures, increasing authoritarianism, and unfulfilled promises of the revolution, opposition remained weak and fragmented. The regime effectively suppressed dissent through restrictions on freedoms, extensive surveillance, repressive measures, and strategic propaganda. Numerous assassination

attempts on Castro's life failed, further solidifying his position. The emigration of hundreds of thousands of Cubans, particularly skilled and educated individuals, reduced internal opposition but also posed challenges for the regime. Ultimately, Castro's regime endured due to the combination of strong internal control and the limited effectiveness of opposition movements.

## Consolidation of Castro's Rule

We will examine the opposition that Fidel Castro faced in his authoritarian state, an essential aspect of understanding the extent of his success in establishing a true authoritarian regime. Several factors contributed to the resistance against Castro in Cuba: failing economic policies, increasing authoritarianism in response to opposition, disillusionment with the revolution's unfulfilled promises, and the disparity between Castro's international popularity and the internal realities within Cuba.

Castro's primary opposition stemmed from various groups: former landowners and industrialists who thrived under Batista's regime, peasants suffering due to collectivization, pro-American Cubans, writers and artists facing government censorship, and academics at the University of Havana protesting the loss of academic freedom. Following his rise to power, the state moved swiftly to suppress dissenting voices. Freedoms of speech and press, which had been limited even before Castro, were further curtailed. Show trials were conducted for political opponents to intimidate and silence them. A notable example is the poet Heberto Padilla, who criticized the revolution in his works. He was arrested, possibly tortured, and subjected to a public show trial where he was forced to confess to alleged crimes against the revolution.

Widespread outcry both within and outside of Cuba over the treatment of Heberto Padilla diminished Castro's support domestically and internationally, yet the persecution of Padilla



had a chilling effect. Artists in the 1970s entered what became known as the *gray period*, during which they were cautious not to produce anything that the state might consider counter-revolutionary. The **Cuban Constitution of 1976** guaranteed artistic freedoms, but only as long as the ideas expressed were not contrary to the revolution, thus restricting true artistic freedom.

The opposition to Castro remained largely weak and ineffective in overthrowing the regime. There was no unified and organized opposition movement; this fragmented resistance lacked the coordination needed to challenge the government effectively. The opposition had minimal support within Cuba, where the police state and surveillance apparatus were extraordinarily strong, and government propaganda successfully portrayed dissent as unpatriotic. The harsh treatment of political prisoners and counter-revolutionaries further curtailed significant opposition efforts.

In 1961, early in the regime, the Cuban State Police established the **General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI)**, modeled after the Soviet KGB. This agency played a crucial role in uncovering opposition both within and outside of Cuba. Internally, local communities and workplaces organized **Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs)** to report on counter-revolutionary activities. By 1963, a third of Cuba's population was involved with the CDRs, effectively enlisting the public to surveil each other.

Military units to aid production were established as labor camps for political prisoners and individuals accused of counter-revolutionary activities. From 1965 to 1968, tens of thousands of Cubans, including political prisoners, youths adopting American styles, and homosexuals, were sent to these camps for re-education in revolutionary doctrine. This extensive surveillance and repressive system helped to consolidate Castro's power by minimizing opposition and enforcing ideological conformity.

Fidel Castro faced hundreds of assassination attempts, many orchestrated by the United States CIA and local political opponents. The failure of these attempts became a powerful propaganda tool for Castro. In 1975, a U.S. congressional committee documented eight distinct CIA attempts to assassinate Castro between 1961 and 1965, some of which were coordinated with the U.S. Mafia, which had suffered financial losses following the Cuban Revolution. These assassination plans included infected scuba suits, exploding cigars, and poison cigars. Castro's bodyguard, Fabian Escalante, claimed that Castro survived over 600 assassination attempts, a figure used to reinforce the narrative of Castro's invincibility and popularity.

A significant factor that aided Castro in eliminating opposition was the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Cubans from the onset of the revolution through the 1980s. Over 350,000 Cubans fled the island, primarily to the United States. Some of these exiles formed cells with the intention of returning to Cuba to overthrow Castro, as exemplified by the Bay of Pigs invasion, which involved over 1,400 Cuban expatriates.

Castro leveraged this large émigré population to justify the extensive surveillance state he established, arguing that opposition still existed and needed to be monitored. Initially, Castro welcomed the departure of anti-Castro Cubans, viewing it as a means to eliminate internal dissent. The government even encouraged criminals and anti-social individuals to leave the island, often releasing prisoners and mentally ill individuals to reduce opposition within Cuba.

Emigration posed a significant problem for the Cuban regime, as many of those leaving were highly skilled and educated individuals. This brain drain led to the implementation of stringent regulations against leaving the island, though these restrictions were occasionally lifted. In 1980, over ten thousand Cubans, protesting against food rations and economic hardships, forced their way into the Peruvian Embassy in Havana seeking asylum.

Fidel Castro exploited this situation as a propaganda opportunity, declaring that those who wished to leave Cuba could do so. Consequently, over 125,000 Cubans departed for Florida during the Mariel boatlift, among them many prisoners and mentally ill individuals.

Ultimately, opposition within Cuba never succeeded in overthrowing the Castro regime, primarily due to limited internal organization and the exodus of many dissenters.

# Chapter 24 - Castro's Domestic Policies

## Key Points

1. **Economic Challenges and Reforms:**
  - a. **Initial Economic Challenges:** Castro inherited a heavily sugar-dependent economy with diminished American investments and fleeing industrial managers post-revolution.
  - b. **Agrarian Reform Act:** This act dismantled large estates, redistributing land but ultimately placing much of it under state control.
  - c. **Nationalization and Subsidies:** The sugar industry was nationalized, rents were subsidized, and infrastructure projects were funded. Luxury goods faced import taxes, and food rationing was implemented.
2. **Attempts at Diversification:**
  - a. **Unsuccessful Diversification:** Efforts to diversify agriculture beyond sugar failed, and industrialization efforts were limited by a shortage of skilled personnel.
  - b. **Soviet Dependence:** Economic reliance shifted to the Soviet Union, with insufficient subsidies failing to fund full industrialization. The Soviet Union became the primary purchaser of Cuban sugar.
3. **Economic Reforms and Failures:**
  - a. **10 Million Ton Harvest:** The 1970 sugar harvest aimed for record yields but fell short, showcasing the state's economic difficulties.
  - b. **1976 Cuban Constitution:** The constitution solidified Castro's power, establishing a socialist state with the Communist Party as the sole political entity.
4. **Economic Decline and Austerity:**
  - a. **1970s Reforms:** Measures to improve efficiency included introducing computers, bonuses for productive workers, and quota systems.
  - b. **Austerity Measures:** In the 1980s, economic decline necessitated austerity measures, reducing consumption

and cutting expensive imports, leading to significant emigration during the Mariel boatlift.

5. **Rectification Program:**

- a. **1986 Reforms:** The program reversed earlier economic relaxations, banning farmers' markets, ending bonuses, and reducing independent farmers' land.
- b. **Special Period:** The collapse of the Soviet Union led to economic turmoil, drastic drops in income, reduced oil supplies, and strict rationing.

6. **Post-Soviet Economic Reforms:**

- a. **Openness to Reforms:** The U.S. dollar was legalized, tourism promoted, and an agreement with the U.S. allowed annual emigration. Relations with the EU and China were sought to improve the economy.

7. **Social Policies:**

- a. **Education:** Schools were nationalized, religious education confined to churches, and new textbooks were introduced. The Exemplary Parenthood Program emphasized parental involvement in education, achieving high literacy rates.
- b. **Women's Rights:** The FMC supported literacy campaigns, trained women in domestic skills, and organized daycare centers. The 1975 Family Code granted gender equality in education and careers, although women still faced traditional domestic burdens.

8. **Religion and Minority Treatment:**

- a. **Religion:** Cuba declared itself an atheist state but softened to a secular state in 1992. Churches had to avoid politics to survive.
- b. **Minorities:** Black Cubans remained economically disadvantaged despite formal desegregation. Homosexuals faced persecution, although homosexuality was decriminalized in 1979.

9. **Economic and Social Gains:**

- a. **Healthcare and Education:** Cuba established a renowned healthcare system with excellent outcomes, low infant mortality, high life expectancy, and high literacy rates supported by free education through the university level.

## Overview

Chapter 24 explores Fidel Castro's domestic policies, focusing on economic strategies and social reforms. Despite significant economic challenges and attempts at diversification, Cuba remained dependent on sugar and Soviet subsidies. Reforms included nationalizing industries, introducing austerity measures, and later adopting some economic openness. Social policies emphasized education and women's rights, though traditional burdens persisted. Despite formal desegregation, black Cubans remained economically marginalized, and homosexuals faced persecution. Notable gains in healthcare and education helped maintain Castro's power, despite ongoing economic and political challenges.

## Aims and Results of Castro's Domestic Policies in Cuba

We will examine the aims and results of Fidel Castro's domestic policies in Cuba, beginning with his economic strategies to consolidate his rule. Initially, Cuba's economy faced significant challenges, primarily due to a lack of diversification. The economy was heavily dependent on the sugar industry, which was underdeveloped and shrinking in market share. Following Castro's rise to power, American investments in Cuba dwindled, exacerbating economic difficulties. Additionally, many industrial managers overseeing the sugar industry fled the country after the overthrow of Batista.

In response to these economic challenges, Castro implemented several reforms. The **Agrarian Reform Act** was introduced to dismantle the *latifundias*—large estates owned by corporations or private landowners—and redistribute land to the people, although much of it ultimately came under state control. Castro also moved to nationalize the sugar industry, placing it

under government ownership. To support poorer Cubans, the government offered subsidies to lower rents and invested in infrastructure projects focused on communication and housing in urban areas. Additionally, import taxes were imposed on luxury goods, and food rationing was implemented to address food shortages in Cuba.

Attempts to diversify the economy in Cuba under Castro were largely unsuccessful, as no other crops proved as profitable as sugar. Efforts to convert sugar farms to less valuable crops like cotton led to a decline in profitable sugar yields. Industrialization efforts were also limited due to a shortage of skilled personnel, many of whom had left Cuba following the revolution. The economic break with the United States exacerbated Cuba's problems, forcing reliance on the Soviet Union for economic subsidies. However, these subsidies were insufficient to fund Cuba's industrialization. Consequently, the Soviet Union became Cuba's largest purchaser of sugar.

By 1970, the Cuban state had collectivized most of the arable land, with two-thirds of the farmland under state ownership. The 1970 sugar harvest was used as a propaganda tool to showcase the strength of Castro's economic reforms, similar to the Great Leap Forward in China or the Soviet Union's five-year plans. The 1970 harvest, known as the "10 million ton harvest," aimed to achieve a record yield but ultimately fell two million tons short of its goal. The skilled cane workers had been moved to industrial roles in previous years, and the intensive efforts to meet the harvest target depleted the soil and damaged future yields. This failed 10 million ton harvest became emblematic of the state's economic difficulties and ongoing challenges.

In response to increasing opposition and economic challenges, Castro adopted more repressive measures. After the unsuccessful 10 million ton harvest, he delegated more responsibilities to subsidiary cabinet members and government

bureaucrats, as codified in the **1976 Cuban Constitution**. This constitution positioned Castro as the Secretary of the Communist Party and head of government, declared Cuba a socialist state, and established the Communist Party as the sole political organization in the country. Local assemblies, composed of Communist Party members, provided delegates for the 600-member National Assembly, and a Council of Ministers, led by Castro, was formed from the National Assembly. The constitution allowed some autonomy to council ministers, streamlined the legal system, and permitted trade unions to voice concerns for workers' rights.

Economic reforms in the 1970s aimed to enhance efficiency and productivity. These included the introduction of computers in factories and offices, provision of bonuses and increased pay for productive workers, and the implementation of quota systems for manufacturing and sugar production. Resources and labor were allocated to the most efficient factories and localities. However, economic decline in the late 1970s and continued dependence on the Soviet Union necessitated austerity measures in the 1980s. These measures called on Cubans to make sacrifices for the national good, reduce consumption, and cut down on expensive imports. The economic hardships contributed to the mass exodus of people storming the Peruvian Embassy in 1980, leading to the Mariel boatlift, during which tens of thousands of Cubans left for Southern Florida.

In 1986, Fidel Castro initiated the **Rectification Program**, which reversed several relaxed policies from the 1970s. The program banned farmers' markets, ended bonuses and extra pay, and reduced the land controlled by independent farmers to just two percent of all arable land in Cuba. Additionally, labor unions experienced a loss of rights, leading to declines in productivity, rises in absenteeism, the growth of black markets, and deteriorating living standards.



The collapse of the Soviet Union precipitated a period known as the *Special Period*, which plunged the Cuban economy into turmoil as Russia significantly cut back its economic support. This led to a drastic drop in Cuban incomes, a reduction in oil supplies from Russia, and the implementation of strict government rationing of consumer goods.

In the post-Soviet era, Castro demonstrated openness to some economic reforms. The U.S. dollar was legalized in Cuba, tourism was promoted, and in 1994, Castro and U.S. President Bill Clinton reached an agreement allowing 20,000 Cubans annually to emigrate to the United States. Castro hoped this policy would result in remittances from Cuban emigrés, thereby introducing American currency into the Cuban economy. Additionally, he sought to improve relations with the European Union and expand economic ties with China.

Despite these economic reforms, political repression persisted. In 2003, the Cuban government escalated arrests of political opposition, culminating in the execution of Cuban dissidents who had attempted to hijack a ferry to escape to the United States. This crackdown on dissidents led to economic sanctions from the European Union, highlighting the ongoing tension between economic reform and political repression in Castro's Cuba.

In 2006, amidst Cuba's ongoing economic struggles and with Fidel Castro's health deteriorating, he stepped down from his position as head of government. His brother, Raúl Castro, subsequently assumed power. We will return in a few days for a further examination of Cuba's domestic policies.

## Castro's Social Policies

One of Castro's major focuses was on education in Cuba. In 1961, the Castro regime nationalized all schools and closed all religious institutions of education. Consequently, religious instruction was

confined to the churches themselves. The government established programs for gifted and talented students, often dictating their educational paths based on assessed skills and abilities. Teachers identified as counter-revolutionary were dismissed, new textbooks were introduced, and libraries were purged of materials deemed inappropriate or contrary to revolutionary ideals. Education in Cuba was thus designed to serve the revolution.

Additionally, Cuba implemented the **Exemplary Parenthood Program**, requiring parents to actively engage in their children's education. This involved regular school visits, supervision of learning and homework, and ensuring strong attendance. The program significantly contributed to achieving one of the highest literacy rates in the world. Moreover, young men in Cuba were conscripted for three years of national service, which included military duties or social and economic work.

## Women in Cuba

Women played a pivotal role in Castro's rise to power, with many being active participants in the *26th of July Movement* before the revolution. A women's guerrilla brigade supported the Castro Revolution from the mountains of the Sierra Maestra. In 1960, early in Castro's rule, the **Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC)** was established. By 1975, three-quarters of all Cuban women were members of the FMC. This organization supported Cuba's literacy campaign, trained young women in domestic skills, promoted hygiene (which improved health outcomes), and organized daycare centers across the nation.

In 1975, the **Cuban Family Code** sought to address gender inequalities, particularly within the household. The code legally granted husbands and wives equal rights to education and career opportunities, extending beyond traditional roles such as nursing and teaching. It also mandated equal domestic

responsibilities at home. Women's participation in the workforce increased from 13 percent before the revolution to over 43 percent by 1975. However, despite these advancements, Cuba remained a patriarchal society. By the mid-1970s, only 25 percent of managerial positions and one-third of the National Assembly were held by women. It was not until 1986 that the first woman was appointed to the politburo, the highest echelon of the Communist Party in Cuba. Despite the 1975 Family Code, women continued to face the "double burden" of working outside the home while still bearing primary domestic responsibilities.

## Castro and Religion

Cuba is predominantly a Catholic nation, but it also has Afro-Cuban religions and smaller communities of Protestants and Jews. Officially, under Castro, Cuba was declared an atheist state, reflecting the Communist disdain for religion. However, in 1992, Castro softened this stance, declaring Cuba a secular state rather than an atheist one.

In the early years of the Revolution, some Catholic clergy viewed it as an opportunity for social and economic justice, while others were concerned about the atheism inherent in communism. Although Castro was raised Catholic and educated in a Jesuit school, he identified as an atheist.

For churches to survive in Castro's Cuba, they had to operate largely outside of politics and avoid being perceived as counter-revolutionary. During the economic hardships of the *Special Period* in the 1990s, following the fall of the Soviet Union, church attendance actually increased. This period saw a resurgence in religious activity as people sought solace amid economic distress.

## Treatment of Minorities

The largest minority in Cuba comprised black Cubans, descendants of enslaved Africans who had worked on sugar plantations. Their social status remained among the lowest both before and after the revolution. While many black Cubans supported the Revolution with the hope of achieving social and economic justice, the Revolution did not significantly improve their circumstances. The government formally outlawed racial segregation, but black Cubans continued to occupy the economic underclass with limited access to the political system. Castro's rhetoric on civil rights often targeted the U.S. civil rights movement and the Jim Crow South, but this did not translate into substantial action or equality within Cuba.

Moreover, Cuba under Castro was intolerant of homosexuality, viewing homosexuals as social deviants. Many were placed in special army units for rehabilitation in labor camps, where they faced persecution and abuse. In 1979, Cuba officially decriminalized homosexuality, but societal persecution persisted. Later in his life, Castro admitted to "great injustices" against homosexuals during the early years of the Revolution.

## Economic and Social Gains Under Castro's Rule

Under Castro's rule, there were notable economic and social gains that helped maintain his grip on power. Cuban universal healthcare received international acclaim, establishing one of the best healthcare systems in the developing world, with outcomes sometimes surpassing those in the United States. With 530 doctors for every 10,000 people, Cuba boasted the second-best healthcare access in Latin America. Additionally, Cuba had the lowest infant mortality rates in Latin America, one of the highest life expectancies in the Americas, and a literacy rate exceeding 98 percent, supported by universal free education through the university level.

## Chapter 25 - Castro's Foreign Policy

### Key Points

#### 1. **Early Soviet Alliance:**

- a. **Military Agreement with the Soviet Union:** Following the Bay of Pigs invasion, Castro secured Soviet military support, including ballistic missiles, solidifying Cuba's defense and strengthening Castro's position.
- b. **Cuban Missile Crisis:** The crisis ended with the U.S. guaranteeing not to invade Cuba, further cementing Castro's rule and enhancing his regime's stability through propaganda.

#### 2. **Economic Dependency on the Soviet Union:**

- a. **Economic and Military Aid:** The Soviet Union provided crucial economic subsidies, military equipment, training, and support for sugar purchases, essential for sustaining Cuba's economy and Castro's regime.

#### 3. **Support for National Liberation Movements:**

- a. **Global Revolutionary Aid:** Castro supported revolutionary movements in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, aligning with his anti-imperialist ideals and securing allies.
- b. **Frictions with Soviet Union:** Despite occasional tensions, Castro's commitment to supporting global struggles against imperialism remained steadfast.

#### 4. **Involvement in Africa:**

- a. **Angolan Civil War:** Cuban forces played a significant role in supporting the MPLA against UNITA, aligning with Castro's anti-apartheid stance and bolstering his domestic and international image.
- b. **Costly Engagement:** The involvement in Angola was economically burdensome and resulted in significant Cuban casualties, though it enhanced Castro's standing among African liberation movements.

#### 5. **Impact of the Soviet Union's Collapse:**

- a. **End of Soviet Support:** The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to severe economic hardship in Cuba, marking the beginning of the Special Period characterized by austerity measures.

- b. **Shift in Foreign Policy:** To stabilize the economy, Castro welcomed foreign investments and formed new alliances, notably with Venezuela under Hugo Chávez, which provided crucial economic relief through oil supplies.

## Overview

Chapter 25 delves into Fidel Castro's foreign policies and their role in maintaining his power. Castro's early alliance with the Soviet Union provided essential economic and military support, solidifying his regime. His commitment to supporting global revolutionary movements bolstered his international standing and secured allies, despite creating tensions with the Soviet Union. Cuban involvement in the Angolan Civil War exemplified Castro's dedication to anti-imperialism and anti-apartheid struggles, enhancing his reputation despite economic and human costs. The collapse of the Soviet Union precipitated severe economic challenges for Cuba, prompting Castro to seek foreign investments and new regional alliances, notably with Venezuela, to stabilize the economy. These foreign policy maneuvers were crucial in maintaining Castro's power and navigating the complex geopolitical landscape.

## Castro's Foreign Policies and Maintenance of Power

We will examine the foreign policies of Fidel Castro and how they contributed to his maintenance of power.

Castro's foreign policies were instrumental in solidifying his regime and extending his influence beyond Cuba's borders. His alignment with the Soviet Union provided economic subsidies and military support, which were crucial for sustaining the Cuban economy and ensuring national security. This alliance was solidified through Cuba's participation in the **Council for Mutual**

**Economic Assistance (COMECON)** and the provision of military aid during the **Cuban Missile Crisis**, which underscored Cuba's strategic importance to the Soviet Union.

Castro also engaged in supporting revolutionary movements worldwide, which bolstered his reputation as a leader of global anti-imperialism. His military and logistical support for revolutionary groups in Latin America, Africa, and Asia helped to foster a network of allies and like-minded states. Notable examples include Cuban involvement in the Angolan Civil War and support for anti-apartheid movements in South Africa. These actions not only extended Cuba's influence but also reinforced Castro's image as a champion of international socialism and anti-colonialism.

Furthermore, Castro's foreign policy successes were utilized as propaganda to strengthen his domestic position. By portraying himself as a key player on the global stage, Castro was able to cultivate a sense of national pride and solidarity among Cubans, which helped to mitigate internal dissent and opposition. This strategic use of foreign policy to enhance domestic control was a hallmark of Castro's approach to governance.

## Early Years and Soviet Alliance

In the early years of Castro's rule, following the Bay of Pigs invasion, Fidel Castro signed a military defensive agreement with the Soviet Union, which brought Soviet weaponry and military advisors to Cuba. This agreement included the deployment of ballistic missiles equipped with nuclear warheads. The aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, with the United States guaranteeing not to invade Cuba, further solidified Castro's rule and aided in his consolidation of power. Both the Bay of Pigs incident and the Cuban Missile Crisis were utilized as propaganda tools to strengthen Castro's regime.

The Soviet Union became Cuba's most crucial economic and political ally, providing military equipment, training, subsidies for sugar purchases, oil, and capital assistance loans. The economic support from the Soviet Union was vital for Castro's maintenance of power. Without this assistance, it would have been exceedingly difficult for Castro to sustain his regime, and the economic situation in Cuba would have been even more dire.

## Support for National Liberation Movements

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, Fidel Castro made supporting National Liberation movements in Latin America and Africa a cornerstone of his foreign policy. These movements sought independence or resisted foreign interference, aligning with Castro's revolutionary ideals. He believed that aiding these movements would help secure allies and future trade partners, which was crucial given that the Soviet Union was Cuba's only significant ally at the time. Castro's experience in leading his own revolution in Cuba provided him with a model to assist other revolutionary movements globally.

The Soviet support for the Cuban military enabled Castro to extend his influence beyond Cuba's borders, which often led to friction with the Soviet Union, especially during the era of détente when the Soviet Union and the United States were attempting to improve relations. Despite this, Castro's commitment to international solidarity remained steadfast, as he saw it as essential to the global struggle against imperialism and for social justice.

## Involvement in Africa

During the decolonization period in Africa, many newly independent states faced significant political and social unrest. Fidel Castro's Cuba actively intervened by providing troops, doctors, educators, and military advisors to support these



nascent nations. Cuban forces played a particularly prominent role in the Angolan Civil War, which lasted from 1975 into the 1990s. Following Angola's independence from Portugal, the country descended into conflict among various factions. The left-wing **Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)**, backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union, clashed with the **National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)**, supported by South Africa and the United States. Castro justified his support for the MPLA as part of the broader struggle against apartheid, framing it as a critique of U.S. civil rights policies and appealing to the African heritage of many Cubans.

Cuba's involvement in the Angolan Civil War generated positive propaganda for Castro domestically, bolstering Cuban nationalism and support for his regime. It also elevated his status as a hero among many African liberation movements. However, the war was immensely costly for Cuba, resulting in thousands of Cuban casualties and imposing a severe economic burden on a state already facing significant challenges. In 1988, both Cuba and South Africa agreed to withdraw their forces from Angola, although the civil war continued until the MPLA ultimately secured victory.

## Impact of the Fall of the Soviet Union

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 had catastrophic repercussions for Cuba, terminating the financial and military support that the island had relied on for decades. This loss significantly undermined Cuba's capacity to support revolutionary movements abroad and ushered in the *Special Period* throughout the 1990s, characterized by severe economic hardship and austerity measures.

In response to the economic crisis, Fidel Castro softened his ideological stance and welcomed foreign investments from countries such as China, Canada, and Spain. This influx of capital

helped stabilize the struggling Cuban economy. Additionally, the rise of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in 2001 provided Cuba with a new political and economic ally. Venezuelan oil began to flow into Cuba, offering much-needed economic relief and strengthening the weakened economy in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse. This alliance with Venezuela underscored a shift in Cuba's foreign policy towards forging new regional partnerships to mitigate the loss of Soviet support.

# Appendix

## German Territorial Changes 1935 to 1939

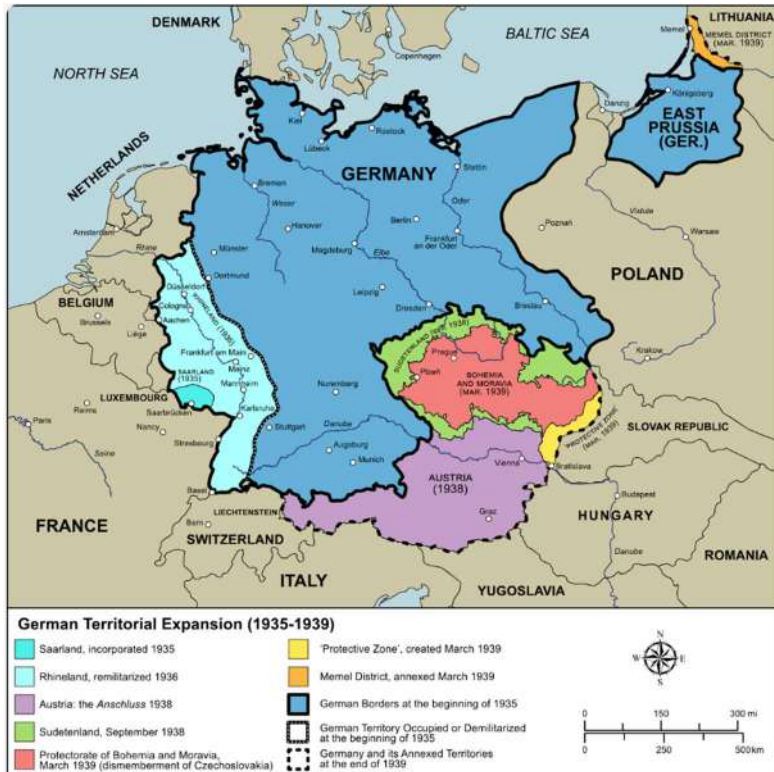


Figure 1

Source: “Germany: Territorial Expansion (1935-1939).” *German History in Documents and Images*, [germanhistorydocs.org/en/nazi-germany-1933-1945/ghdi:map-2884](http://germanhistorydocs.org/en/nazi-germany-1933-1945/ghdi:map-2884), 13 July 2024.

## Castro's Revolution

### *The Granma yacht*



*Figure 2*

Fighters disembarking from the *Granma* onto the Cuban coast, 1956

*Granma* is a yacht that was used to transport 82 fighters of the Cuban Revolution from Mexico to Cuba in November 1956 to overthrow the regime of Fulgencio Batista. The 60-foot (18 m) diesel-powered vessel was built in 1943 by Wheeler Shipbuilding of Brooklyn, New York, as a light armored target practice boat, US Navy C-1994, and modified postwar to accommodate 12 people. "Granma", in English, is an affectionate term for a grandmother; the yacht is said to have been named for the previous owner's grandmother.

### Granma Route, 1956



Figure 3

The route of *Granma* from Tuxpan, Mexico, to Playa Las Coloradas, Cuba, November 1956

### Insurgency, 1956-1957



Figure 4

Map of Cuba showing the location of the arrival of the rebels on the *Granma* in late 1956, the rebels' stronghold in the Sierra Maestra, and Guevara and Cienfuegos' route towards Havana via Las Villas Province in December 1958

*Key locations of the Cuban Revolution*



Figure 5

Map showing the key locations in the Sierra Maestra mountains and surrounding locations of the Cuban revolution (1958).

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### Appendix:

#### Figure 1: German Territorial Changes 1935 to 1939

Sources and cartography: Map 1, “Territorial Changes, 1935-1939,” in *Germany and the Second World War*, edited by the Research Institute for Military History, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany. Volume I, *The Build-up of German Aggression*, by Wilhelm Deist, Manfred Messerschmidt, Hans-Erich Volkmann, and Wolfram Wette. Clarendon Press, 1990. Original cartography by Cherie Norton/Mapping Solutions. Revised cartography by Gabriel Moss, 2021.

#### Figure 2: The Granma yacht

Unknown. “Expedicionarios-del-yate-granma.” Available at:

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing\\_of\\_the\\_Granma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing_of_the_Granma). Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

#### Figure 3: Granma Route, 1956

Unknown. “Granma-route-mine-20.” Available at:

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing\\_of\\_the\\_Granma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing_of_the_Granma). Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

#### Figure 4: Insurgency, 1956-1957

Unknown “Revolution Map of progress.” Available at:

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#### Figure 5: Key locations of the Cuban Revolution

Unknown “Cuba Rev3.” Available at: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban\\_Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Revolution).

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# Glossary

## Hitler's Germany

**Anti-Semitism** - Hostility, prejudice, or discrimination against Jews. A central element of Nazi ideology, leading to widespread persecution and the Holocaust.

**Aryanization** - The process of transferring Jewish-owned businesses and properties to Aryan ownership, part of the broader agenda of economic disenfranchisement and persecution of Jews.

**Authoritarianism** - A political system characterized by strong central power and limited political freedoms. Individual freedoms are subordinate to the state, and there is little or no constitutional accountability or democratic decision-making.

**Censorship** - The suppression or prohibition of speech, public communication, or other information. The Nazi regime heavily censored media, literature, and the arts to control public perception.

**Charismatic Leadership** - A leadership style where the leader uses personal charm and charisma to influence and inspire followers. Adolf Hitler's ability to mobilize mass support is an example of charismatic leadership.

**Coercion** - The practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats. In authoritarian regimes, coercion is often used to maintain control and suppress dissent.

**Domestic Policies** - Policies implemented within a country to address internal issues. Nazi domestic policies focused on totalitarian control, racial purity, and social engineering.

**Economic Autarky** - A policy of economic self-sufficiency aimed at reducing reliance on foreign imports. Nazi Germany pursued autarky to prepare for war and sustain the economy independently.

**Economic Factors** - Economic conditions and policies that influence political stability and public support. In Nazi Germany, economic recovery and employment were critical in gaining and maintaining support.

**Enabling Act** - A 1933 law that gave Hitler the power to enact laws without the involvement of the Reichstag, effectively establishing a legal dictatorship.

**Foreign Policy** - A government's strategy in dealing with other nations. Nazi foreign policy was aggressive and expansionist, aiming to establish German dominance in Europe.

**Four Year Plan** - A series of economic measures initiated in 1936 aimed at making Germany self-sufficient and ready for war within four years.

**Führerprinzip (Leader Principle)** - The principle that Hitler was the ultimate authority in Nazi Germany, embodying the will of the nation and commanding absolute obedience.

**Gleichschaltung (Coordination)** - The process of Nazi consolidation and control over all aspects of German society, including political, social, and cultural institutions.

**Ideology** - A system of ideas and ideals that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy. Nazi ideology was based on notions of racial superiority, nationalism, and anti-Semitism.

**Impact of War** - The effects that wars have on societies, economies, and political structures. Both World Wars had significant impacts on Germany, influencing the rise and policies of the Nazi regime.

**Indoctrination** - The process of teaching a person or group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically. The Nazis indoctrinated youth through organizations like the Hitler Youth.

**Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass)** - A coordinated attack on Jewish businesses, synagogues, and homes across Germany on November 9-10, 1938, marked by widespread destruction and violence.

**Lebensraum (Living Space)** - The Nazi policy aimed at acquiring territory in Eastern Europe to provide living space for the Aryan race.

**Legal Methods** - The use of laws and legal processes to achieve political goals. The Nazis used legal methods, such as the Enabling Act, to legitimize their power.

**Night of the Long Knives** - A purge in 1934 in which the Nazi regime carried out a series of political extrajudicial executions to eliminate potential threats within the party and consolidate Hitler's power.

**Nuremberg Laws** - Racist laws implemented in 1935 that institutionalized many of the racial theories underpinning Nazi ideology, including the exclusion of Jews from German citizenship and prohibiting marriage between Jews and non-Jews.

**Opposition** - Groups or individuals who resist or oppose a particular regime or policy. In Nazi Germany, opposition was brutally suppressed through arrests, executions, and concentration camps.

**Persuasion** - The process of convincing someone to believe or do something through reasoning or argument. Unlike coercion, persuasion relies on voluntary change in belief or behavior.

**Police State** - A totalitarian state controlled by a political police force that supervises citizens' activities. Nazi Germany was a police state with extensive surveillance and repression by the Gestapo.

**Political System Weakness** - Flaws or failures in a political system that make it vulnerable to manipulation or collapse. The weaknesses of the Weimar Republic facilitated the rise of the Nazi Party.

**Propaganda** - Information, especially biased or misleading, used to promote a political cause or point of view. In Nazi Germany, propaganda was a tool used to manipulate public opinion and control the population.

**Reichstag Fire** - A pivotal event in 1933 when the German parliament building burned down, which the Nazis used as a pretext to crack down on communists and consolidate power.

**Social Division** - The division of society into different social groups, often leading to inequality and conflict. The Nazis exploited social divisions, particularly anti-Semitic sentiments, to consolidate power.

**Third Reich** - The term used to describe Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945, considered the successor to the Holy Roman Empire and the German Empire.

**Total War** - A war strategy involving the complete mobilization of a nation's resources, industries, and people towards the war effort. Nazi Germany pursued total war from 1943 onward.

**Use of Force** - The application of military or police power to achieve political objectives. The Nazi regime used force to suppress opposition and enforce their policies.

**Volksgemeinschaft (People's Community)** - A Nazi ideal that promoted a racially unified and hierarchically organized society where individual interests were subordinate to the common good.

**Volkstum (Ethnicity/Nationality)** - A concept emphasizing the importance of ethnic or national identity, often used by the Nazis to promote the idea of a pure Aryan race and justify exclusion and persecution of others.

**Women in the Third Reich** - Nazi policies towards women focused on their roles as mothers and homemakers to promote Aryan population growth and traditional gender roles.



## Castro's Cuba

**Agrarian reform** - The redistribution of land from large landholders to peasants or government.

**Armistice** - An agreement made by opposing sides in a war to stop fighting for a certain time; a truce.

**Authoritarianism** - A system of government characterized by strong central power and limited political freedoms.

**Bay of Pigs Invasion** - A failed military invasion of Cuba undertaken by the United States in 1961.

**Charismatic Leadership** - A style of leadership in which the leader possesses charm and persuasiveness, inspiring loyalty and devotion from followers.

**Coercion** - The use of force or intimidation to obtain compliance.

**Consolidation of Power** - The process by which an individual or group secures complete control over political power, often eliminating checks and balances.

**Cuban Missile Crisis** - A 13-day confrontation in 1962 between the United States and the Soviet Union over Soviet ballistic missiles deployed in Cuba.

**Economic Embargo** - A ban on trade and other commercial activity with a particular country.

**Economic Sanctions** - Penalties applied by one country onto another to achieve foreign policy objectives.

**Exile** - The state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons.

**Guerrilla Warfare** - A form of irregular warfare in which small groups use military tactics, like ambushes and raids, against larger traditional forces.

**Ideology** - A coherent set of beliefs that formulates social and political objectives.

**Internationalism** - A political principle which advocates a greater political or economic cooperation among nations and peoples.

**Nationalization** - The process of converting private assets into public assets by bringing them under the public ownership of a national government.

**Non-Alignment** - The state of being not aligned with or supporting any side in a political or military conflict, such as the Cold War.

**Opposition** - Individuals or groups who resist the policies or authority of the ruling party.

**Propaganda** - Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.

**Purge** - The expulsion or removal of individuals deemed undesirable by those in power from a government, party, or other organization.

**Revolutionary Zeal** - Enthusiastic motivation to radically change the political, economic, or social fabric of society according to revolutionary principles.

**Social Division** - The existence of distinct social groups within a society, often resulting in tension or conflict.

**Soviet Bloc** - This term refers to the group of communist states under the influence of the Soviet Union during the Cold War era.

**United States Embargo** - The economic embargo by the U.S. against Cuba that began in 1960 and has continued to various degrees to the present day.

# Index

- 14 Points
  - Fourteen Points..6, 50, 53, 55, 225
- 1933 coup .....179, 182
- 1936 Berlin Olympic Games ..... 155
- 1952 coup .....187, 188
- 26th of July Movement*... 185, 188, 189, 190, 192, 194, 210
- abdication of Kaiser
  - Welhelm II.. 38, 43, 45, 47, 48, 60, 63, 92
- Afro-Cuban..... 211
- Agrarian Reform Act 204, 206
- Aktion T4 ..... 158
- Allied .5, 7, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 59, 61, 62, 63, 70, 74, 88, 91, 94, 106, 108, 149, 154
- Allied forces (Allies) .. 38, 44, 46, 62, 63, 91
- American Relief
  - Administration ..... 70, 72
- Anglo-German Declaration ..... 16, 164
- Angola .....213, 217
- Angolan Civil War...213, 214, 215, 217
- anti-colonialism..... 215
- Anti-Comintern Pact ..... 163
- anti-Semitism .....30, 31, 33, 36, 151, 156, 238
- Article 231
  - War Guilt ..... 70, 73
- Article 48..... 118, 119, 120, 121
- Aryan .. 30, 31, 138, 151, 155, 156, 157, 237, 239, 240
- Austria .. 4, 11, 16, 37, 38, 39, 43, 57, 59, 62, 107, 137, 160, 162, 163, 224, 225, 229
- Austria-Hungary ..... 38, 62
- Austrian .....39, 107, 163
- Austro-Hungarian Empire 37, 39, 40
- autarky* ..... 15, 27, 153, 237
- Autobahn* ..... 27, 153
- Autumn Offensive* of 1958.. ..... 185, 190
- ballistic missiles ... 213, 215, 241
- Batista ..... 17, 179, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 200, 206, 220
- Bauer..... 99, 100
- Bavarian Red Army .....68
- Bavarian Soviet Republic ..7, 8, 65, 66, 67, 69, 78, 82, 83, 84, 225
- Bay of Pigs 18, 192, 193, 195, 196, 202, 213, 215, 241
- Beer Hall Putsch ... 113, 136, 138

<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
Belgium ..... 57, 61, 64, 94, 108, 114, 135	concentration camps .... 140, 141, 143, 144, 147, 158, 239
Bielefeld Agreement.. 87, 88, 89, 93	<i>Condor Legion</i> ..... 163
black Cubans ..... 206, 212	<i>Confessional Church</i> ..... 149
blitzkrieg..... 129	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON)..... 215
Bolshevik revolution.. 59, 62, 136	covert operations (CIA)... 195
Bolshevik uprising..... 89	Cuban Communist Party 167, 192, 193, 194
brain drain ..... 199, 202	Cuban Constitution..... 184, 186, 187, 201, 204, 208
Brownshirts ..... see <i>Sturmabteilung (SA)</i>	Cuban Constitution of 1976 ..... 201
Bulgaria ..... 40	Cuban Family Code..... 210
<i>Bund Deutscher Mädel</i> (BDM)..... 157	Cuban Missile Crisis..... 18, 193, 196, 197, 213, 215, 241
Catholic ..... 65, 69, 142, 145, 149, 211	Cuban Revolution.... 17, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 183, 185, 186, 191, 202, 220, 222, 233, 234, 235, 236
Catholic Center Party..... 142	Cuban State Police. 198, 201
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) ..... 189	Czechoslovakia..... 164
Central Powers .... 39, 44, 46	<i>Danzig</i> ..... 164
Chancellor (Germany)..... 3, 14, 44, 47, 99, 100, 107, 121, 132, 133, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142	Dawes Plan.... 112, 113, 114, 122
Chávez ..... 214, 218	Death's Head division..... 144
CIA. 185, 189, 193, 195, 196, 199, 202	decolonization ..... 216
Clinton ..... 209	<i>diktat</i> ..... 133
Colombia ..... 187	Dominican Republic..... 187
Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) ..... 198, 201	Ebert..... 43, 47, 99, 100, 101
Communist Party of Germany ..... 80, 84, 92	
Compiègne Forest ..... 42	

Edelweiss Pirates...145, 146, 149	Geneva Disarmament Conference .....161
Editor's Law of 1933 ..... 155	German Communist Party ..... 141
Education in Cuba ..... 210	German Empire....45, 47, 48, 61, 106, 240
Eisenhower, Dwight D. (IKE) ..... 195	German high command...40, 61, 62
Eisner ..... 65, 66, 67	German Labor Front 151, 154
Enabling Act14, 26, 140, 141, 142, 147, 238, 239	German Mark . 104, 105, 120
enslaved prisoners..... 155	German morality .... 117, 124
Exemplary Parenthood Program, ..... 210	German Newspaper Bureau ..... 155
Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC) ..... 210	German Revolution ....5, 44, 45, 46, 48, 67, 224, 225
Final Solution... 30, 152, 158, 231	Gestapo German secret police ..26, 144, 147, 231, 239
first Silesian Uprising ..... 91	<i>Gleichschaltung</i> ..... 15, 140, 141, 142, 238
Foch.....40, 42, 63	Goebbels 138, 141, 151, 152, 155
Four-Year Plan . 15, 151, 152, 153, 154, 238	Göring.....127, 151, 152, 153
Franco-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance..... 163	Granma ... 18, 185, 189, 190, 220, 221, 236
Freikorps ....9, 10, 65, 68, 69, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 102, 136, 226	Great Depression ..... 27, 32, 118, 119, 120, 123, 124, 127, 128, 132, 135, 138, 152
<i>Führer</i> .....14, 140, 141, 155	Greater Berlin Act of 1920 ..... 125
Führer principle ..... 155	Guantanamo Bay .. 178, 181, 186
<i>Führerprinzip</i> ..... 155	Guevara, Che ... 18, 172, 185, 188, 189, 190, 191, 221, 233, 234, 235
Fundamental Law of the Republic .....192, 194	
General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI)..... 198, 201	

## *Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro*

Habsburg Empire ..... 40, 43  
Hearst, William Randolph...  
..... 180  
High Command..... see  
German High Command  
Himmler .. 140, 141, 143, 146  
Hindenburg..... see von  
Hindenburg  
Hirschfeld ..... 127  
Hitler Youth 16, 29, 148, 149,  
151, 156, 157, 238  
Hoffmann ..... 68, 231  
Holocaust...27, 36, 152, 159,  
230, 231, 237  
Hundred Days Offensive .41,  
44, 46  
Hungary 4, 37, 38, 39, 43, 57,  
59, 62, 65, 66, 107, 225,  
229  
hyperinflation .. 11, 104, 105,  
107, 111, 115, 116, 118,  
119, 120, 127, 132, 134,  
135, 227  
inflation 44, 46, 74, 105, 108,  
109, 110, 111, 135  
Institute for Sexual Science  
.....127, 128  
Integrated Revolutionary  
Organizations..... 194  
Jew(ish) .. 16, 36, 67, 90, 116,  
137, 138, 142, 151, 152,  
155, 156, 158, 159, 211,  
230, 237, 239  
July 20th bomb plot.....145,  
146, 148

## *Hutchings*

Kaiser Wilhelm II ... 5, 38, 43,  
44, 45, 47, 48, 59, 60, 62,  
63, 92, 236  
Kapp.... 9, 10, 11, 76, 77, 78,  
79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85,  
87, 88, 92, 95, 98, 99, 100,  
101, 102, 103, 226  
Kapp Putsch... 76, 77, 78, 79,  
80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87,  
88, 92, 95, 98, 99, 100,  
103, 226  
Kennedy..... 193, 195, 197  
Keynes.... 8, 9, 70, 71, 73, 74,  
75, 226  
Khrushchev..... 196  
Kiel .. 5, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48  
*Kinder, Küche, Kirche* ..... 157  
KPD ..... 84, 92, 93, 97, 120  
Kristallnacht ..... 158, 239  
labor camps... 158, 199, 201,  
212  
*latifundias*..... 206  
Law for the Prevention of  
Hereditarily Diseased  
Offspring ..... 157  
League of German Maidens  
..... 16, 151, 156, 157  
League of Nations  
League ... 6, 50, 53, 55, 58,  
70, 73, 108, 161, 162  
*Lebensraum*..... 35, 137, 160,  
161, 164, 239  
Liebknecht..... 84  
Locarno Treaties ..... 163  
London Schedule of  
Payments ..... 11, 104, 107

Lorraine.....	41, 57	Nazi ideology .	28, 29, 30, 31,
Ludendorff.	4, 40, 64, 78, 137		34, 36, 151, 152, 237, 238,
Luftwaffe .....	162		239
Lutheran Church.....	149	Nazification....	140, 141, 142,
Luxemburg .....	84		143
Machado .....	178, 181	Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression	
Mafia (US).....	187, 202	Pact .....	147, 165
Mariel boatlift .	203, 205, 208	neutral zone...	87, 88, 89, 90,
McKinley.....	178, 180		92, 94
<i>Mein Kampf</i> .....	138	New Look Policy .....	195
Millerand .....	90	Niemöller.....	146, 149
Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact		<i>Night of the Long Knives</i> ...15,	
.....	164		140, 141, 143, 145, 146,
Moltke the Elder .....	61		239
Moncada ....	17, 18, 184, 188,	Noske .....	68, 78
	189, 234	NSDAP... 120, 132, 133, 134,	
Moncada Barracks ..	17, 184,		135, 137
	188	Nuremberg Race Laws ...	158
Monroe Doctrine .....	196	Operation Michael.....	59, 63
Movement for the Liberation		Operation Valkyrie... 15, 145,	
of Angola (MPLA) .....	217		148
Munich Conference .....	164	organized crime ....	123, 178,
Mussolini.....	163		181
National Labor Service ...	153	Ottoman Empire ..	37, 38, 40,
National Liberation			46, 57
movements.....	216	Pact of Steel.....	164
National People's Party ..	142	Palm Sunday Putsch ..	65, 67
National Socialist German		Palma .....	181
Workers' Party (NSDAP)		Paris Peace Conference ..	73,
.....	120, 134, 137		224
National Socialist Party ..	142	<i>Partido Ortodoxo</i> ....	184, 187
National Union for the Total		People's State of Bavaria .	65,
Independence of Angola			66
(UNITA) .....	217	Pervitin ....	13, 123, 125, 128,
naval blockade, Cuba ....	196		129, 130, 131

Platt Amendment...178, 180, 184, 186	Saar plebiscite ..... 160, 162
proportional representation ..... 118, 119, 121, 136	Saarland ..... 161
rallies ..... 121, 138, 155	Sambre Canal ..... 41
Rathenau.....110, 111	Schacht ...106, 151, 152, 153
Rectification Program ... 205, 208	Schiessbefehl shooting order .....68
Red Front Fighters' League ..... 121	Schlieffen Plan ..... 7, 59, 61
Reich Radio Company.... 155	Scholl ..... 148
Reichstag .... 14, 45, 47, 113, 119, 120, 121, 136, 140, 141, 142, 147, 238, 240	<i>Schutzstaffel</i> (SS) ... 143, 144
Reichstag elections..... 141	<i>Schwartz Kapelle</i> ..... 147
Reichstag fire.. 140, 141, 147	second Silesian Uprising ..91
Reichswehr..... 77, 102	Serbia .....39, 57, 62
Reparation Commission... 73	Show trials .....200
reparations.... 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 87, 90, 92, 94, 104, 105, 106, 107, 114, 120, 122, 132, 134, 135, 161	Sierra Maestra 185, 189, 210, 221, 222
Rhineland ...16, 88, 106, 160, 162, 163	social Darwinist ..... 156
Röhm ..... 68, 143, 145, 146	Social Democrat ...68, 77, 84
Roman Catholic Church. 149	Social Democratic45, 47, 66, 81, 92, 96, 99, 101
<i>Rome-Berlin Axis</i> ..... 163	Social Democratic Party SPD 45, 47, 92, 96, 99, 101
Ruhr crisis ..... 135	Social Democrats.87, 88, 89, 91, 93, 96, 97
Ruhr Red Army. 9, 10, 76, 77, 79, 80, 82, 85, 87, 88, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96	Soldiers' and Workers' Council of Munich.....67
Ruhr uprising ... 9, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 97	South Africa ..... 215, 217
rule by decree 119, 120, 121, 136, 140	Soviet NKVD..... 144
Russian Revolution .....47	Soviet Republic in Bremen66
	Spa Conference ...10, 87, 88, 90, 91
	Spanish Civil War .... 16, 160, 163
	Spartacist Uprising.... 66, 78, 82, 83, 84, 95
	Spartacus League .... 84, 136
	SPD ... 45, 47, 93, 96, 99, 101



<i>Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro</i>	Hutchings
<i>Special Period</i> .....205, 209, 211, 213, 217	van der Lubbe ..... 141
Speer..... 154	Venezuela ..... 214, 218
"stab-in-the-back" ..... 122	Versailles Conference . 6, 50, 53
Streicher..... 116	vices/vice, Weimar ..... 124
Stresemann ..... 112, 113	von Baden ..... 44, 47
<i>Sturmabteilung</i> (SA) ..... 137, 143	von Hindenburg...4, 40, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 138, 139
Sudetenland ..... 16, 160, 164	von Lüttwitz ... 76, 78, 84, 99, 102
sugar ..... 107, 178, 181, 184, 186, 204, 206, 207, 208, 212, 213, 216	von Papen ..... 139
swastika ..... 155	von Stauffenberg ..... 148
Swing Kids ..... 145, 146, 148	Waffen-SS..... 144
T4 euthanasia program.. 145, 149	Wall Street Crash 1929..... 120
Taft..... 49, 52, 181	Wannsee Conference..... 158
Thule Society ..... 67	war bonds.... 70, 71, 72, 105, 106
Treaty of Versailles ..... 8, 9, 14, 16, 55, 58, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 83, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94, 98, 104, 105, 113, 118, 119, 122, 125, 132, 133, 134, 135, 137, 160, 161, 162, 163, 225	war guilt clause ..... 133
Turkey ..... 39, 193, 196, 197	Wehrmacht..... 3, 140, 141, 143, 157, 158, 225, 229, 230, 232
United Party of the Socialist Revolution..... 192, 194	Weimar Constitution 12, 118, 119, 120, 121, 136, 142
unrestricted submarine warfare ..... 52, 59, 62	Weimar Republic... 9, 12, 13, 32, 45, 47, 48, 71, 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 88, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 103, 105, 111, 112, 113, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 126, 128, 131, 132, 134, 135, 136, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 232, 239
Upper Silesia plebiscite. 104, 105	
USPD..... 92, 93, 97	
USS Maine ..... 178, 180	
Valenciennes ..... 37, 41	

*Authoritarian States: Hitler and Castro*

Hutchings

Western Front 42, 46, 59, 62,  
225

White Rose ..... 145, 146, 148

Wilhelm..... see Kiaser

Wilson, Woodrow..... 6, 49,  
50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58,  
224, 225

"yellow journalism" 178, 180

Zimmerman Telegram.. ...50,  
52

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Harold Hutchings is a resolute and enthusiastic history teacher with a wealth of experience and a strong academic background. He holds multiple Master's degrees in Educational Leadership, Teaching at the Secondary Level, and History, along with a Bachelor's degree in History with a foundation in Educational Theory and a Minor in Speech & Performing Arts. Harold is actively involved in professional societies including *Phi Alpha Theta* (ΦΑΘ), an American academic honor society for students and professors of history; *Kappa Delta Pi* (KDP), a professional honor society in education; and *the Organization of American Historians* (OAH), a professional society dedicated to the teaching and study of American history.

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